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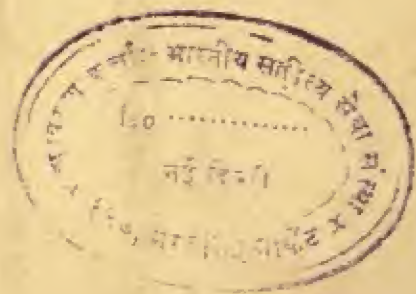
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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE RELATIONS  
BETWEEN "GODS" AND "POWERS" IN THE VEDA,

A PROPOS OF THE PHRASE

*SĪNUḤ SAHASAḤ*

DISPUTATIONES  
RHENO-TRAJECTINAE

DISPUTATIONES INSTITUTI AD LINGUAS  
ORIENTALES  
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J. GONDA

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BY  
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Authorities seem to be almost unanimous with regard to the interpretation of the well-known Vedic phrase *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ* which, applied to Agni, admits of the literal translation "son of power": this name is generally held to have been given to the god because he, i.e. fire, is produced by 'the powerful friction' of the kindling sticks.<sup>1</sup> Macdonell,<sup>2</sup> who does not subscribe to this explanation without some reserve, refers, like other scholars, in substantiation of this view to a passage of the *Ṛgveda* stating that Agni – the god of fire who is never separated from the element which he represents – "rubbed with strength is produced by men on the surface of the earth" (*ṚV.* 6,48,5 *sahasā yo mathito jāyate nṛbhiḥ pṛthivyā adhi sānavi*). It must be admitted that at first sight this reference seems a convincing argument, more convincing in any case than *ṚV.* 1,27,2 *sa ghā naḥ sūnuḥ śavasā* "he (Agni) our son by (with, through) 'power'" which is interpreted by Geldner<sup>3</sup> as: "er, unser Sohn durch (unsere) Kraft", which is a possibility, not a necessity. A closer examination of all the data relative to Agni – who being one god, exists in innumerable flames –, to his birth, the conception of birth in general, *sahas* and similar powers, and the interrelations between 'gods' and 'impersonal powers', may however induce us to ask ourselves whether the traditional view should be accepted integrally.

As a correct understanding of this rather frequent phrase used in connection with one of the main deities of the Vedic pantheon is of some

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Petrograd Dict. VII, 867 ("Agni als der durch Kraft der Reibung er, zeugte"); R. Roth, *ZDMG*, 43, p. 593; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (1923), p. 120; A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), who makes, in this connection, mention of Agni's being credited with ten mothers, because friction is engendered by the action of both hands. Compare also K. F. Geldner's translation of *ṚV.* 1,27,2 "unser Sohn durch (unsere) Kraft". For Agni's other births which can be left unmentioned here, see e.g. Oldenberg, *o.c.*, p. 107f., and *Ṛgveda, Textkritische und exegetische Noten*, I (Berlin, 1909), p. 6 f.; 239 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 91. (On p. 12 the same author is, as far as I am able to see, nearer to the truth.) A similar cautious formulation was chosen by L. Renou, *L'Inde classique*, I (Paris, 1947), p. 325, and by V. M. Apté, in *The history and culture of the Indian people*, edited by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker, I (London, 1951), p. 373.

<sup>3</sup> K. F. Geldner, *Der Rig-veda übersetzt*, I (Harvard, 1951), p. 29.

importance, for the interpretation of similar expressions occurring in the Veda as well as for our knowledge of the rather complicated ideas entertained by the ancient Indians with regard to the interrelations between gods and men and the way in which the former displayed their activities on behalf of the latter, an ample discussion of the phrase itself and of some problems raised by it may be justified.

It can hardly be said that the particular manifestation of Agni known as 'son of strength' has attracted the attention which it deserves. What strikes us in perusing those R̥gvedic passages in which it occurs is in the first place the comparatively frequent references to the god's protective power, his victoriousness, his readiness to help and assist his worshippers, his ability to ward off influences and circumstances inimical to success and prosperity. RV. 1,58,8 (the poem is of course addressed to Agni) "extend, O son of strength, uninterrupted protection to us, who praise (Thee)..." (*achidrā sūno sahaso no... stotṛbhyah... śarma yacha*); 5,4,8 "have pleasure in our sacrifice, O son of strength...; watch over us with threefold protection"; 6,15,3 "extend wealth and extensive protection";<sup>4</sup> 7,3,8; 10,142,1. The priest who calls himself Agni's father, because he kindles fire, and his son because he implores his protection nevertheless addresses him: "O son of *sahas*" (5,3,9). The son of strength is, at night, gracious to that man whom he assists in order to arrive at a state of well-being (RV. 4,11,6 *doṣā śivaḥ sahasaḥ sūno agne yaṁ deva ā cit sacase svasti*). The reciter has recourse to him: 10,142,1, cf. 6,1,10; he is watchful with his splendour (or 'power, strength': 3,24,3 *dyumnena jāgrve*); he annihilates distress, providing those praying with riches: 6,11,6; cf. 13,4. The feature mentioned last is often emphasized: 6,5,1 "I invoke, on your behalf, the son of strength, the youth... who has the disposal of (and advances) property and all good things..." (*huve vaḥ sūnuṁ sahaso yuvānam... | ya invati draviṇāni... viśvavārāni*); 8,71,11 "(our songs of praise should reach) Agni, the son of strength, in order to make him present us with treasures" (... *agniṁ sūnuṁ sahaso... dānāya vāryāṇām*); 10,45,5 the same god is called "son of strength" as well as "bearer of possessions" (*dharuṇo rayiṇām*).

Curiously enough, the same characteristic is mentioned in the stanza 6,18,11 where the phrase under discussion is, by way of exception, attributed to the god Indra: "approach, O Indra, son of strength, with wealth on a thousand paths which abound in *vāja*- (vigour)".<sup>5</sup> It is also Indra who,

<sup>4</sup> For the idea of broadness or extensiveness see the author's *Aspects of early Vignulism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 61 ff.; 68 ff.; etc.

<sup>5</sup> For *vāja*-, a term expressing a complex of ideas, beliefs, conceptions, experiences



in 6,20,1, as a son of strength, is eagerly implored to give that wealth which brings thousandfold benefit, which wins fertile land, conquers inimical powers, and with heroic valour defeats other men in battle. Power, victory, gain, *vāja*-, children, food, enjoyments, are also the objects of the poet's efforts to prevail on Agni in 6,13,6: *vadmā sūno sahaso no viḥāyā agne tokaṃ tanayaṃ vāji no dāh* etc.; 7,1,21; 7,7; 16,4; 8,71,11; 10,45,5; cf. 1,127,1. Elsewhere Agni, the son of *sahas*, magnifies the abodes by his assistance (3,25,5 *sadhassthāni mahayamāna ūtī*). Whoever worships the god and glorifies him with songs of praise will be rich and renowned (6,5,5; 10,11,7). He is implored to extend his favour and broad protection to individual men: 7,16,4 (cf. 6,15,3). A remarkable passage is 6,13,5 where Agni, the son of *sahas*, is asked to bestow favours upon his worshippers through his (heroic) power (*śavasā*). He is implored to conduct the gods to the sacrifice: 6,50,9; 7,16,4. The poet and his patrons hope that they will not incur the god's displeasure: 7,1,22. The son of *sahas* has proved able to make sacrifices effective: 10,50,6; cf. also 3,11,4; 28,3. Compare also 6,6,1; 12,1; 8,19,7; 25; 60,2. It is clear that these deeds, performances and favours could easily be expected from a being who is strong and powerful himself; being a "son of power" does not – at least to the mind of modern man – a priori imply these abilities.

This enumeration is not to deny that the epithet can also be given to the god in other contexts: 1,143,1; 3,1,8; 28,5; 6,4,1. It is also given to Indra: 6,21,11; and – elliptically – *dyukṣaṃ sahasas* "the celestial (son) of *sahas*": 9,71,4, to Soma.\*

A perusal of a large number of texts will show that expressions for filial relations interchange with other attempts to indicate and clarify the relation between the unseen powers. Soma for instance is variously associated with other powers – he is united with the Fathers (RV. 8,48,13), his origin is in heaven, being born on high: "child of heaven" (*dīvaḥ śiśuḥ*: RV. 9,38,5) etc. –, but RV. 9,82,4 he is child (*garbha*-) of Pajrā, who according to the Indian tradition is the earth. Parjanya is once said to be Soma's father (RV. 9,82,3), but elsewhere the latter is called a buffalo increased by, or grown up through, Parjanya (RV. 9,113,3): in both cases the meaning of course is, that the growth of the soma plant depends on rain.

An interesting place is RV. 10,10,2 = AV. 18,1,2 "the sons of the great

converging in a special power which manifests itself in animal and vegetable life, in the capacity for life, growing, lasting etc., see *Aspects of early Vignuism*, p. 48 ff. etc.

\* See L. Renou, *Études védiques et postvédiques*, I (Paris, 1955), p. 39,1; cf. also RV. 10,115,7; 8,102,7.



asura, his heroes, sustainers of the firmament (*dyaus*), look widely about". Here the unnamed agents or spies of heaven or of the great god residing in the heavens whose task it is to watch man and to notice his sins are called his sons.

Although it would be beyond the scope of this publication to discuss all allusions to physical life, biological processes, and relationship used by ancient Indian authors in expounding their views of the connection between the phenomena of this world and their relations to the unseen, some notes may in addition to the above observations find a place here.

The ultimate principle or original source of creation, the One, is already RV. 1,67,5 referred to as the "Unborn One" (*aja-*) and the poet of 1,164,6 inquires about the identity of the One in the form of the Unborn One. Cf. also 8,41,10. In 10,82,6 we come across the phrase "navel of the Unborn One", a place bearing the One on which rest, or depend, all creatures.

That persons – living beings or beings conceived as possessed of physical life – were born from the mind is, in Vedic and post-Vedic literature, a frequent statement: RV. 7,33,11 *utāsi maitrāvaruṇo vasiṣṭhor-vaśyā brahman manaso 'dhi jātaḥ* "... and thou, O V., art the offspring of M. and V. brought into the world from mind by U.": "die Idee des geistigen Sohnes".<sup>7</sup> In the epics and the purāṇas mention is made of Brahman's mind-born sons (e.g. Mbh. 1,65,10), the great ṛṣis, Marīci etc.; in the Bhagavadgītā 10,6 Kṛṣṇa-Bhagavat declares that the great sages and the four Manus are of his nature and born from his mind (*manas*), but according to Muṇḍ. Up. 2,1,3 *manas* itself was produced from the Highest Person (*Puruṣa*).

Similar remarks could be made with regard to phrases such as *balād jātaḥ*: RV. 10,153,2 Indra is said to have been born from physical strength, from overwhelming power, from creative energy: *tvam indra balād adhi sahaso jāta ojaṣaḥ*. In an interesting passage a poet gives evidence of his scepticism about the origin of the same god: 10,73,10 in contradistinction to those who hold Indra to have originated in the horse, the poet is inclined to the belief that he was born from *ojas*. In 8,62,10 Indra's "born *śavas*", his *kratu-* and the god himself are put on a par, being co-ordinated in a copulative asyndeton.

Living beings, lifeless substance, ideas or concepts and powers may be variously connected and associated: RV. 1,164,42 for instance the cow, which is identified with Vāc (Speech), is considered the source of the seas,

<sup>7</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 213.

on which live the quarters of the sky; from them flows the imperishable, on which lives everything. In one and the same stanza (R.V. 1,148,1) Agni is called a priest (*hotar-*) and stated to have been kindled. Cf. 1,149,2. Sky and earth are on the one hand widely capacious and on the other, a couple of parents.

There are gods in the Vedic pantheon whose "sonship" rests largely upon their reputation of being representatives or manifestations of certain aspects of their 'father', although they have, at least in the eyes of pre-scientific man, a certain independent existence.<sup>8</sup> Parjanya, i.e. Rain, who impregnates everything and by whose activity the plants spring up, is a son of the sky – or of Dyaus, if it should be preferred to emphasize the personal aspect of this divine power –: 7,102,1. This god is also theriomorphically conceived as a bull (cf. e.g. 7,101,6); in this respect as well as in his relation to rain, lightning, and thunder, he resembles in character his father, i.e. the Sky, Dyaus, himself (cf. also 2,27,15; 10,45,4 etc.). Parjanya is *vr̥ṣṣimat-* "raining" (e.g. 8,6,1), rain comes from him (9,22,2) or from Dyaus (2,27,15; 5,84,3 etc.). The Maruts, who are likewise shedders of rain and are often associated with thunder, lightning and the roaring of the wind are not only the heroes of the firmament, but once also its (or: his) sons (10,77,2).

It is clear that the Sun, Sūrya – it is often doubtful whether the 'god' or the natural phenomenon is meant – is called the son of Dyaus, the sky or light of heaven (10,37,1). Remarkably enough, the great luminary was not only placed in the firmament by other gods, but also given light by Soma (6,44,23 *ayaṃ sūrye adadhāj jyotir antaḥ*; 9,97,41), another instance of the belief that essential qualities are a sort of accretions.

As will be seen in later sections of this publication cases are not rare in which a definite 'power' is conceived as an 'impersonal potency', and sometimes as a 'divine person'. A good example is *dakṣa-* which is 'personified' as "the Clever or Dexterous One" i.e. "Cleverness", or "Dexterity", a deity associated with Aditi with whom he constitutes a pair of universal parents,<sup>9</sup> although he is also said to have sprung from that goddess. It is significant that Mitra and Varuṇa are in the selfsame stanza R.V. 7,66,2 spoken of as *dakṣapitarā*, i.e. "those whose father is *dakṣa-* (or *Dakṣa-*)" and as *sudakṣa-* "very clever" (*devāḥ sudakṣā dakṣapitarā*), whereas in 8,25,5 they are termed *sūnū dakṣasya*, an expression which obviously is comparable to *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ*. Those who unlike

<sup>8</sup> That the characteristics of a 'father' and a son were not rarely confounded was already observed by A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, III (Paris, 1883), p. 356 s.v. *père*.

<sup>9</sup> For particulars see Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 46.



the present author consider the personal aspect as secondary might argue that these passages help to clarify the transition from 'personal' to 'impersonal' representation of power. It would be better to hold that the Indians in these matters very easily shift their ground, drawing no hard and fast line between both aspects of the unseen.

The gods may also be called "the sons of *dakṣa-*", a 'concept' not easy to determine. Etymologically connected to Gr. *δεξιός* "(on) the right (hand, side); dexterous, ready, skilful, clever" and the Lat. *dexter* – the relationship of which to other words can be left undiscussed here<sup>10</sup> –, it denotes, adjectivally and substantivally, in reference to persons, actions, and phenomena, and in a great variety of applications, such ideas as "able (ability), adroit, clever, dexterous; energy, strength of will, etc. etc.". RV. 8,25,5 it reads: "the two children of great heroic power (*napātā śavaso mahāḥ*), the sons (*sūnū*) of *dakṣa-*, those of great strength of mind (*sukratū*), whose fattening gifts are extensive, inhabit the place of refreshment". Here the poet has in view Mitra and Varuṇa, to whom the same power-substance is attributed in RV. 1,15,6 "Ye, O M. and V., have obtained *dakṣa-* which is not easy to destroy . . ."; 1,2,7; 1,24,7; 1,139,2 "when you, M. and V., separated falsehood from truth by your own ardour (*manyu-*), by the ardour of your *dakṣa-*"; 3,62,17 where they rule through the greatness of their *dakṣa-*; cf. also 5,60,10; 66,4. Elsewhere, RV. 1,2,9 M. and V. are stated to grant "efficient working-power" (*dākṣam . . . apāsam*) to those praying. RV. 1,23,4 the same gods are said to have been born with *dakṣa-*. But in the Atharvaveda, 1,35,1–2 the expression *dākṣāyanāḥ* "descendants of Dakṣa" clearly is of wider application. A difficult place is RV. 3,27,9: mentioning the generation of fire the poet adds that "he (it) received the embryo of existences, the child (the word is nom. fem.) of Dakṣa, the father" (acc.: *dakṣasya pitaraṃ tanū*). The words "received the embryo of existences" are quite clear AV. 5,25,2 and 6,17,1 in connection with the earth. Here the word "father" must be an apposition to "embryo"; the father, Dakṣa, probably being regarded as the cosmogonical 'principle' which he is to become in later times. This is possible, the poet holds, although Agni himself is a son of Dakṣa: one of the mystic paradoxes appreciated by the Vedic public. In the next stanza Agni is indeed called Dakṣa's (son). Agni is RV. 1,95,6 called the lord of *dakṣas* (*dakṣāṇāṃ dakṣapatīḥ*). "Lord (*pati-*) of *dakṣa-*" is on the other hand Indra: RV. 1,56,2 (cf. also 5,38,4), although his power-substance is elsewhere attributed not only to Mitra and Varuṇa

<sup>10</sup> See A. Walde-J. Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterb. der indogerm. Sprachen*, I (Berlin-Leipzig, 1930), p. 784.

(see above), but also to Agni: Thou art worthy of our devotion "durch die Einsicht und Bereitwilligkeit deines Willens" (Geldner): *kratvā dakṣasya mañhanā* 5,10,2. Cf. also 5,18,2.

Beside *dakṣa-* we find the neuter *dākṣas*. The most probable interpretation of R.V. 6,48,1 might be: "with every offering and every word of praise addressed to Agni who is *dakṣas* we will. . .".

There is another point which deserves a brief comment. As already stated the name Agni is far from being alone in designating not only a 'deity', but also a 'phenomenon'. With regard to the phenomenon the phrase 'son of strength' may therefore be taken to have expressed the correct view that fire is a manifestation of 'victorious power', a thought not incomparable to the daily birth of Dawn (*Uṣas*), the daughter of the heavens (cf. e.g. R.V. 10,39,12), i.e. a manifestation of their essence.

The combination of "son", being a term applying to organic life, and "victorious power", which in the opinion of modern man should be considered an 'abstract idea', might easily be paralleled by many similar instances. In Vedic terminology a large variety of ideas and anorganic entities can be said to have been born like men or animals: 10,72,2 existence from the non-existent; 4 the quarters of the heavens from the earth; 87,13 bow-shots of anger (i.e. fits of anger) born from the mind; 10,90,5 *Virāj* (the female principle of creation) from *Puruṣa*, and *Puruṣa* from *Virāj*; 12 the *śūdra* from the feet of the Primeval Being; cf. also 10,190,1 f. Here also any thought of birth and a physical relation can be almost completely absent: R.V. 1,97,4. The sun, or the sun god is the son of Heaven and earth: R.V. 1,160,3. But these entities have themselves been generated by the most capable of the capable deities (1,160,4), probably an anonymous Primeval Being<sup>11</sup> (the verb used is *jajāna*).<sup>12</sup>

In a curious Atharvanic text (AV. 1,35,2) a potent amulet is called "the first-born force of the gods" (*devānām ojaḥ prathamajam*).

It is generally agreed that the word "father" is, in Vedic terminology, often 'metaphorically' given to gods. However, in this case also the idea of procreation and physical relationship is not so much stressed as other aspects and implications of fatherhood. Agni for instance is addressed as "the providence and father", who gives strength to those praying, who consider themselves to be the god's relatives (R.V. 1,31,10 *tvam agne pramatis tvam pitāsi nas tvaṃ vayaskṛt tava jāmāyo vāyam*). Especially

<sup>11</sup> But compare Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 219.

<sup>12</sup> In describing the creation of a horse the poet of R.V. 1,161,7 uses, on the other hand, the verb *ṛakṣ-* "to form by cutting, fashioning".



the term *pramati*- "providence, care" is not rarely connected with *pitar*-; cf. 1,31,14.

No real difficulty lies in the fact that Agni is, on the other hand, described as being procreated by the mortal men who kindle the fire: 1,31,11; 2,5,1 "the hotar (Agni) has been born, the father, in order to bring aid to his fathers" (*pitā pitrbhya ūtaye*). These passages only show, in addition to the well-known predilection of these poets for 'plays' upon words and thoughts, that various aspects of fatherhood could be present to their minds at the same time.

It is therefore hardly necessary to dwell on other passages where Agni is addressed as a father of his worshippers, as well as their son: cf. RV. 2,1,9 where he is also a protector and friend; 1,31,16 friend, father and providence. Agni, indeed, "vereinigt alle Verwandtschaftsgrade in sich";<sup>13</sup> that is to say, he is in any case a procreative power and a manifestation of that power.

Whereas such statements as for instance that found RV. 2,26,3 where Bṛhaspati is said to be the father of the gods must be taken to mean that the lord of brahman is their source, that without him they would not exist, in other texts the term "father" may be taken to refer to the older and wiser generation: "who knows them shall be the father's father" (RV. 1,164,16; AV. 2,1,2 etc.) means something like: "shall be very wise".

Let it therefore, for the present, suffice to suggest that these terms of relationship mainly serve to clarify the connections and relations existing, or supposed to exist, between the various and complex phenomena in nature. There is nothing to surprise us in finding that the same deities are believed to have had a plurality of fathers or mothers:<sup>14</sup> these statements simply reflect various possibilities looming in the minds of these poets, various tentative answers to the difficult problem of the origin and relationship of the phenomena with which they were confronted.

## II

If there is a son, there must be a father, although remarkably enough the latter does not always seem to have attracted the attention of religious man before the former.<sup>1</sup> Now, "father" is also a term of extensive sig-

<sup>13</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 276.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 78, with regard to the Maruts. Cf. e.g. also RV. 1,164,12.

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Harrison, *Epilegomena to the study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1921),

nificance. It certainly does not always mean for the non-scientific mind what it does for modern man; often much less importance is attached to physical relationship than to authority, fullness and source of power, representation of the older generation, experience (cf. e.g. RV. 1,69,2), affection and tenderness.<sup>2</sup> Van der Leeuw<sup>3</sup> emphasized the self-imparting activity of the divine Father: he is the indubitably superior (in India, the *guru*- or authority), from whom power is derived, and who imparts and communicates himself. In ancient times the father often was the teacher.<sup>4</sup> His nature and character are perfectly familiar to his son, who represents him, depends on him, comes from him, or simply *is* his power when active in this world. "For a son the father is all; he alone gives as an offering his body and all else there is to give" (Mbh. 12,266,18 *sarvaṃ putrasya vai pitā*<sup>5</sup>). A father grants the wishes of his son (cf. RV. 1,134,9; 3,49,3; 6,52,6), bestows vigour and strength upon him (3,49,3) – a remarkable place is RV. 10,23,5 "(Indra) who has increased his strength and heroic power like a father (those of his son)" –; "with which Prajāpati (the Lord of creatures) embraced his creatures for their security, with that I embrace you (O son)": Kauṣ. Up. 2,11.

Another point of interest concerns the belief common to numberless primitive and semi-primitive peoples that the link with Power is at the same time the relationship with divine beings. The emperor of China was the "son of heaven". Remarkably enough, he never was the son of the supreme lord of heavens, although this divinity is often mentioned in our sources. The Chinese emperor was to rule in accordance with the orders of heaven, which repudiated him in case of infidelity. The sun-god Rē had been the first ruler of Egypt and the Pharaoh was, to the extent that he ruled, an image of that god.<sup>6</sup> The so-called priest-kings of the ancient Sumerians, representing the divinity, maintained relations with the unseen powers, with which they were considered to be connected by

p. 18 ff.; van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 104 f. – Fire is as a rule considered masculine, cf. e.g. Śat. Br. 1,1,1,18 *yaṣā vā āpo vṛśāgnih*, sometimes however, feminine: see A. Minard, *Trois énigmes sur les cent chemins*, II (Paris, 1956), p. 324 f. (§ 881 f.).

<sup>2</sup> In Indian literature these aspects of fatherhood often appear in similes. See also A. Bertholet, *Das Geschlecht der Gottheit* (Tübingen, 1934), p. 19; J. A. J. Verheyen, *Her Hoogste Wezen bij de Manggaraiers* (Wien, 1951), p. 26 f.

<sup>3</sup> Van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education* (London, 1947), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> For the meaning of *sarva*- see my relative paper in *Indian Linguistics* 16 (S. K. Chatterji jubilee volume) (Madras, 1955), p. 53 ff.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. A. Erman, *Die Religion der Ägypter* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1934), p. 56. For sons of the sun see also M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1949), p. 125; 128; 134; 139.



a sort of physical relationship.<sup>7</sup> In India a king was a divinity (*deva*-.). The Orphic of classic antiquity appearing in the nether world before the gods refers to his divine origin: "my race is of Heaven"; "I am of your blessed race, ye gods".<sup>8</sup>

This relation is often explicitly stated to be filial. In ancient Semitic countries the ruler was the representative and son of God.<sup>9</sup> Great heroes in Greek and Indian mythology were descended from gods. The Chinese conception was shared by other peoples of East and Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> But this "sonship" need not imply physical relationship.<sup>11</sup>

In considering problems such as that under discussion it is, generally speaking, a methodical imperfection not to enter into details with regard to the question as to how those authors who composed the sources on which we have to rely looked upon the 'ideas' and 'concepts' with which we are concerned. It is, in this particular case, obvious from the very outset that the exact meaning and connotations of phrases such as *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ*, *apam napāt* etc. may be clarified by a consideration of the use and meaning of terms of relationship, especially of those for "son, descendant" in various 'semi-primitive' civilizations on the one hand and by an insight into the religious significance of sonship on the other.

With regard to the meaning of a filial relationship from the point of view of the comparative study of religions it does not seem to be a great error to hold that the term 'son' often applies to a manifestation or realization of that being or idea which is called, or considered, a father: "the ... son of God, Begotten of his Father before all worlds, ... Being of one substance with the Father. ..." (Book of Common Prayer). The identity of father and son is often explicitly taught in our sources: Śat.Br. 12,4,3,1 "the father is the same as the son, and the son is the same as the father" (*ya u vai putraḥ sa pitā yaḥ pitā sa putraḥ*); Ait.Br. 7,13, st. 9 "the husband enters his wife, having become a germ (he enters) the mother; in her becoming renewed he is born in the tenth month" (*patir jāyām praviśati garbho bhūtvā sa mātaram | tasyām punar navo bhūtvā daśame māsi jāyate*); Manu 9,8 "the husband, after having entered his wife, becomes an embryo and is born again of her; for that is the wifehood

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, 1948), p. 89 ff.; 148; 159 etc.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Diels, *Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1906 ff.), II, p. 175; K. Kerényi, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 27 (1928), p. 322 f.; Van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 515.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. F. Jeremias, in A. Bertholet-E. Lehmann, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, I (Tübingen, 1925), p. 633.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. P. W. Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, X (Münster i.W., 1925), p. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also N. Söderblom, *Das Werden des Götterglaubens*<sup>2</sup> (1926), p. 192; 146.

of wife (i.e. that is why a wife is called a wife, or simply: is a wife) that he is born again by her" (*patir bhāryāṃ saṃpraviśya garbho bhūtvēha jāyate | jāyāyās tad dhi jāyātvaṃ yad asyāṃ jāyate punaḥ*). The same thought is expressed Yājñ. 1,56 "there (i.e. in the woman with whom one has intercourse for the sake of generating a son) one is born himself" (*tatrāyaṃ jāyate svayaṃ*). A stanza found in various texts – Kauṣ.Ār. 4,11; Nirukta 3,4 etc. – and prescribed as a formula for recital in the birth ceremonies<sup>12</sup> addresses the new-born child as follows: "you are born from each of the limbs, from the heart (of the father), you are indeed one's own self called son" (... *ātmā vai putranāmāsi*). Whereas the wife is a friend, the daughter is a misfortune, the son is, according to Mbh. 1,159,11, the very self of a man (*ātmā putraḥ*). This is true in various meanings of the term and taught under many circumstances: one of the questions posed by a yakṣa and answered by Yudhiṣṭhira in order to secure the restoration to life of his brothers who had died relates to the same identity (Mbh. 3,313,71); in a story relating the merits of an ascetic who presented a portion of barley belonging to his son to a hungry guest the son declares himself to be his father's *ātmā* or self; by giving his food to the guest the father therefore "rescues himself by his own self" (Mbh. 14,90,63). Compare also Mbh. 1,74,48; 14,81,20, etc. For reasons of space we cannot dwell here upon the social-economical aspects of the relations between father and son which however cannot entirely be dissociated from the matter at issue: patriarchal societies and joint family systems have no doubt exerted influence upon the spread of these conceptions. Until recent times the ties of blood often induce sons and other relatives to consider themselves as representative of the head of the family to an extent hardly known in the modern West. For instance a man whose father is in debt can, in many parts of the East, be compelled to pay the outstanding amount, if the debt is not settled by his father. We can now understand Rv. 5,11,6 where Agni, "whom they call the son of *sahas*", is explicitly stated to have been born, i.e. to be, "great *sahas*".

An interesting line is Rv. 10,56,6 cd *svām prajām pitarāḥ pitryaṃ saha āvareṣv adadhuḥ tantum ātatam* "the fathers have placed their offspring, the paternal *sahas*, the extended thread (i.e. the continuity or propagation of the family) into (their) descendants". In this reflection on the relation between sons and fathers, the former – i.e. in this context in the first place the Aṅgīrasas – are stated to support their fathers by

<sup>12</sup> See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, III (Poona, 1946), p. 641, n. 1220.



procreating offspring "und umgekehrt übertragen die Väter ihre väterliche Ueberlegenheit (Gewalt) auf die Söhne und verbürgen durch sie die Geschlechtsfolge".<sup>13</sup> I fear that "Gewalt" is not the correct translation. The *Āngirases*, who have *Agni* as their chief, are closely associated with *Indra*, whom they assist in his heroic exploits. *Sāyaṇa's* explication "force fit to defeat others and relating to their father, (the) *Āditya*" (*pitar ādityasya saṁbandhinam aparābhibhavakṣamaṇi balam*) seems more probable, the more so as stanza 5 speaks of *sahas* (plur.) with which "they have circumambulated the universe". In any case *sahas* is a supranormal principle transmitted by fathers to their sons and enabling them to face the dangers of life.<sup>14</sup> It may in this connection be remembered that *Indra's sahas* is explicitly said to have been born from *sahas* (5,31,3). *Macdonell*<sup>15</sup> was certainly right in drawing attention to epithets of fathers becoming proper names of sons; thus *viśvarūpa-*, a qualification of *Tvaṣṭar*, is also the name of his son, and *Manu* is, like his father, called *Vivasvat*. As is well known *Bharata's* descendants may in later times bear the same name as their forefather.

From the religious point of view the son brings salvation. Having an intense longing for continuance of life, for life which surpasses himself, persists after himself and is more powerful than this brief span of life, man wishes for a son, in whom life is continued and the existence of the family is safeguarded, in whom the very essence of the father himself and his ancestors, the potency of the race, is preserved. It is therefore not astonishing that sonship was, in India, very often connected with the idea of salvation. "This is why offspring is wished for: 'They shall save me'" (*Mbh.* 1,159,4 *ityartham iṣyate 'patyaṁ tārāyīṣyati mām iti*); "in the boat called "son" ferry your forefathers and yourself over to the other shore" (e.g. *Mbh.* 5,118,7); "for their own good fathers yearn after sons who bring them salvation from out of this world in that beyond" (*Mbh.* 7,173,54).<sup>16</sup> The 'explication' of the word *putra-* "son" as *put-tra-* "who rescues from the hell called *put*"<sup>17</sup> is too well-known to deserve a long comment: it is found countless times. "What is called offspring is the

<sup>13</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 220 f.

<sup>14</sup> For father-son relationship see also W. J. Goode, *Religion among the primitives* (Glencoe, Ill., 1951), p. 195.

<sup>15</sup> Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> For other passages of the same tenor see e.g. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual life in ancient India* (London, 1930), p. 149 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *putrah punnāmno narakāt trāyata iti yogāt putra ity arthaḥ*. For references (*Manu* 9,138 etc.) see e.g. Kane, *o.c.*, II, p. 561. For the character of this etymology see the author's article "The etymologies in the ancient Indian brāhmaṇas", *Lingua*, 5, p. 61 ff.

threefold Veda of the ancients, and of the godheads that which lasts for ever" (Mbh. 1,100,69), that is to say: like the Veda, offspring is, for gods and men, something eternal which surpasses both of them. The son secures 'immortality' (Ait.Br. 7,13, st. 4), that is to say 'continuation of life':<sup>18</sup> compare also an early text such as Ṛgveda 5,4,10 "may I obtain 'immortality' through progeny" (*prajābhir agne amṛtatvam aśyām*).<sup>19</sup> Cf. also Bṛh.ār. Up. 1,5,17. If a son means life and salvation, it is easily intelligible that a sonless wife was regarded as being possessed by the goddess of destruction, Nirṛti (Śat.Br. 5,3,2,2).<sup>20</sup> One of the words for son, in Sanskrit, is *tanaya*- "who propagates, continues (the family)", another *nandana*- which, if I am not mistaken,<sup>21</sup> originally meant something like: "who renews, refreshes, strengthens, corroborates, protects (the family)".

The son indeed not only continues the life of the father – cf. e.g. Kauṣ.Up. 2,15, he is the manifestation and fulfilment of the idea represented by the father.<sup>22</sup> A son is, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad says (1,5,17), "brahma (study of the Veda), sacrifice (all religious merits accumulated by sacrificing) and world – which comes to existence in this world and the world beyond – of his dying father".

A son may therefore be called "the out-birth" or concept of the Father's mind, which He possesses within Himself, "the flawless expression or character of the Father".<sup>23</sup> "This is why all that lives in the Father unmanifested in the Unity, is also in the Son actively poured forth in manifestation" (Ruysbroeck). "So vereinigen sich dann in der Zeit des babylonischen Weltreichs alle Erlösererwartungen und alle Hoffnungen der Menschen für eine glückliche Schicksalsbestimmung und Schicksalswendung auf Marduk von Babylon, welcher als der geliebte Sohn Ea's alle Geheimnisse des göttlichen Vaters weiss und über alle Macht im Himmel und auf Erden verfügt und dadurch... der Helfer (wird) im

<sup>18</sup> For 'immortality' see P. Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte*, Ber. Sächs. Ak. d. Wiss., 98 (1952), 5, p. 15 ff.

<sup>19</sup> In contradistinction to K. F. Geldner, *Der Rig-veda übersetzt*, II (Harvard, 1951), p. 7, who expresses the opinion that the poet desires either to survive, together with his poetic art, in his children or to live in the world beyond through the sacrifices of his offspring, I would prefer to take these words literally without reading something more into them. The word *amṛtatvam* is explained by Sāyaṇa as *samṛtatyavicchedalakṣaṇam* "to be defined as: uninterrupted continuance".

<sup>20</sup> For Nirṛti- now see L. Renou, in *Indian Linguistics*, 16 (S. K. Chatterji jubilee volume) (Madras, 1955), p. 11 ff.

<sup>21</sup> "The meaning of Skt. *nand-*", *Acta Or.*, 21 (1951), p. 81 ff.

<sup>22</sup> See also G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation* (London, 1938), p. 646 ff.

<sup>23</sup> E. Underhill, *Mysticism* (London, 1930), p. 115.



Kampf gegen alle böse Geister, welche das Lebensglück bedrohen".<sup>24</sup>

In studying the connotations of the term "son", attention may also be drawn to a more extended or general sense which tends to become a pleonasm in expressions such as *āryaputra-* which – literary meaning "son of an ārya or 'gentleman' " – came to be a polite form of address for "lord, gentleman (also to husbands etc.)"; *rājaputra-* "king's son, prince, a man belonging to the royal family or clan, a man of royal descent"; in Pāli *luddaputta*, lit. "son of a hunter" is another term for a hunter in general. In castes in which the occupational tradition is strong, the son or young man may be conceived to be a new representative of the 'idea' expressed by the elder members of his community. Compare also *kulaputra-*, lit. "a son of a noble family" i.e. a "respectable youth" and similar terms.

### III

Let us now pass to a discussion of the meaning of the term *sahas*. Among the numerous places where this word occurs, there are many in which it is attributed to Indra, the god who in the belief of Vedic man represented force, energy, and vitality in nature, and who was intimately connected with vegetative life and victoriousness. Not rarely *sahas*, like other 'Daseinsmächte' or 'power-substances',<sup>1</sup> impresses us as constituting, for the ancient Indian, a sort of 'entity', 'substance', or 'potency', supposed to be present in beings, objects, or phenomena, and by virtue of which these are powerful, effective or influential.<sup>2</sup> Thus RV. 1,55,8 Indra is described as carrying inexhaustible wealth<sup>3</sup> in his hands and possessing invincible *sahas* in, or on, his body (*aprakṣitam vasu bibharṣi hastayor aṣāḥṣam sahas tanvi śruto dadhe*): according to the commentator Sāyaṇa the words *aṣāḥṣam sahaḥ* mean *śatrubhir anabhibhūtam balam* " (physical) strength not (to be) overpowered by enemies". Cf. also 2,16,2. RV. 1,57,6 the same god is even said to be the sole possessor of all *sahas* (*viśvam dadhiṣe kevalam sahaḥ*); although it is hardly possible to translate these words otherwise (cf. also Geldner: "Alle Gewalt hast du vollständig im alleinigen Besitz"), the proper sense of the middle forms of the root

<sup>24</sup> F. Jeremias, *o.c.*, I, p. 590.

<sup>1</sup> I refer to *Ancient-Indian ojas*, Latin *\*augos* and the Indo-European nouns in *-es- -os-* (Utrecht, 1952), p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> See also H. von Glasenapp, *Entwicklungsstufen des indischen Denkens* (Halle S., 1940), p. 9 ff.

<sup>3</sup> This term which refers to a sufficient or plentiful supply of livelihood and possessions, is, of course, not to be understood in any modern sense.



*dhā-* is "to assume, put on, seize, hold, bear", accompanied by such objects as inter alia, articles of dress or ornament, a name, an embryo ("to conceive"), offerings, presentations, etc. Cf. 8, 4, 10 (Indra) *ojiṣṭhaṃ dadhiṣe sahaḥ*. Thus Indra has assumed the best or most excellent (*jyeṣṭha-*) *sahas*: RV. 8,4,4.<sup>4</sup> In another Rgvedic passage it is the very *sahas* which enables Indra to defeat Vṛtra, who on the other hand is said to have the disposal of the same power: 1,80,10 "Indra knocked out Vṛtra's power (i.e. courage or violence), (his) *sahas* with *sahas*" (*indro vṛtrasya taviṣṭim nir ahan sahasā sahaḥ*). There can hardly be any doubt that this nuance, "victorious or conquering power, Ueberlegenheit, irresistibility, preponderating power, overwhelming force, that particular strength, power or ability by which its bearer can vanquish his enemies", is the central meaning of the term under consideration.<sup>5</sup> Compare for instance also 10,49,8 where Indra boasts to have humiliated, by his own *sahas*, one of his enemies by depriving him of this power to excel others (*ahaṃ ny anyaṃ sahasā sahas karam*). RV. 5,32,7 "when Indra raised his weapon against the great Dānava, his irresistible *sahas*": as we cannot follow Sāyaṇa in considering *sahas* an adjective or agent noun (*śatruṇām abhibhavitṛ-*), the text leaves us an alternative: either *sahas* is a second object, or the thunderbolt is regarded as *sahas* in material form. Thus *sahas* may (7,97,6) be taken as an apposition of Bṛhaspati: being a manifestation of this 'Daseinsmacht' this god obviously may be 'identified' with it.<sup>6</sup>

Other passages referring to Indra's "Siegeskraft" are: RV. 10,50,1 (together with *śravas* "glory" and *nṛmṇa-* "courage"); 6,18,4 where his *sahas* is stated to be *sat* "real", the stanza constituting a concatenation of assertions of the god's power; dominion and *sahas* were conceded to him by the (other) gods (6,25,8) or by the heaven and earth (7,31,7).

Other deities who are more or less incidentally described as being in the possession of *sahas* are Indra's companions, the Maruts (5,57,6) and Sūrya, the Sun (10,170,3) who has widely extended and displayed his *sahas* and *ojas*.

Now, the possession of this victorious power is also ascribed to Agni: 5,23,4 "for he (Agni), who dwells (as a friend) among all men, possesses the 'Siegesmacht' which conquers his enemies" (*sa hi ṣmā viśvacarṣaṇīr*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. RV. 1,84,5.

<sup>5</sup> "Sohn der Siegeskraft" (J. Hertel, *Die awestischen Herrschafts- und Siegesfeier*, Leipzig, 1931).

<sup>6</sup> Grassmann, *Wörterbuch* s.v., regarded *sahas* as an adverb.

*abhimāti saho dadhe*<sup>7</sup>). Cf. also 6,8,1. Elsewhere, RV. 6,1,1, Agni, the first priest who introduced the use of sacral poetry, "made this hymn an invincible *sahas*". Compare also RV. 1,36,2 "the human beings made Agni an increaser of *sahas*" ("...zum Mehrer ihrer Stärke" Geldner): the god who represents *sahas* is able to give and to increase it.<sup>8</sup>

As already stated the enemy is sometimes also supposed to possess *sahas*. Hence such passages as RV. 8,9,13 "if I could invoke you, O Aśvins... in the combats in order to overpower the *sahas* (of the enemies)" (...*yat prtsu turvaṇe sahaḥ*).<sup>9</sup> Cf. also 7,56,19; 8,4,5.

The plural *sahāṃsi* may be translated by "feats or exploits of *sahas*, victories": RV. 4,22,9 "(O Indra) perform for us your feats of *sahas*"; or: manifestations of *sahas*: 6,66,9; 10,44,1.

Yet *sahas* is more than mere 'Siegeskraft'. Indra's *brhat*, i.e. "firm, solid, great"<sup>10</sup> *sahas* is described as sustaining heaven and earth, mountains, plains, waters and the sun: 8,15,2; here Geldner's translation "hohe Macht" does not seem to be completely adequate. As it is not advisable to disconnect this 'special meaning' from the other, we might suggest "dominion" or one of its synonyms; cf. also RV. 1,24,6 where Varuṇa's supremacy (*kṣatra*-), *sahas*, and temperament (*manyu*-) are said to be even beyond the reach of the flying birds. Etymologically speaking this semantic nuance is perfectly clear: the sense of "holding, sustaining, supporting" is for instance common in the Greek relatives of *sahas*, *ἔχω* etc. Agni is on the other hand by his *sahas* a ruler of many kinds of food: RV. 5,8,5, obviously because he makes them edible.

How difficult it is to render words of this category into a modern language may, however, appear from texts such as RV. 1,52,11 where Indra's famous *sahas* is said to equal the sky (or: heaven) in *śavas* ("heroism, superiority") and *barhaṇā* ("firmness"). The ideas of "control", "superiority" or "dominion" are on the other hand not out of tune with such verbs as *namasyati* "to pay homage" (RV. 1,84,5) and *saparyati* "to worship" (RV. 1,84,12), nor are they improbable translations of RV. 1,103,3 *āryaṃ saho vardhayā dyumnam indra* "O Indra, increase (strengthen) the dominion and glory (splendour) of the Aryans".

<sup>7</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 21, seems to be right in considering *a.s.* a haplology instead of *abhimāriṣāḥaṃ sahaḥ*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also RV. 1,66,4 *vāṇi na prīto vayo dadhāti* "like a satisfied horse he gives youthful strength"; 1,73,1, and similar text-places.

<sup>9</sup> "Möglich wäre auch: um die Uebermacht, um in den Kämpfen siegreich zu sein" (Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 305).

<sup>10</sup> The meaning of *brhat*- has been dealt with in *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 31 ff.



In AthV. 6,39,1 an oblation is stated to have been made with *sahas* (*sahasṛta-*): it should increase as *yaśas* "glory, renown", "be prompted" by Indra, "possess thousand-fold might", and make the man on whose behalf it is brought attain chiefhood. From Kauś.Sū. 13,4 it appears that an amulet is made of the navel-hairs of various powerful beings (e.g. a king, a bull, a lion, a snātaka<sup>11</sup>) or of splinters of ten kinds of auspicious trees; in AthV. 6,38, which is used together with 39, the "brilliance" (*tvīṣi-*) of lion, fire, brahman, sun etc. are invoked to come to the person benefited together with *varcas* "splendour".

In other texts the amulet is not called "made with *sahas*", but "possessing *sahas*": AthV. 2,4,6, where an amulet against witchcraft is expected to prolong life; similarly, 8,5,2 where it is also called a hero, formidable, rival-slaying etc.; cf. also 19,34,4; 19,32,5 both the amulet and the person speaking are described as possessing *sahas* (cf. 3,18,5), "may we, both of us, becoming full of *sahas*, overpower (*sahiṣivahi*) our rivals"; cf. also st. 10. A "powerful" (*sahasvatīm*) plant used in an incantation directed against various evils or evil beings (*kaṇva-*<sup>12</sup>) is called a "formidable grinder-up" of evil. Cf. 8,2,6, and 8,7,11 where "very powerful" plants are asked to save cow, horse, man, and beast.

Fuel is in a magical context (AthV. 10,5,43) described as a "rather powerful deity" (*devī sahiyāsī*). The war-drum, an important implement used in battle-rites for striking terror into the hearts of a hostile army (cf. 16,1)<sup>13</sup> is not only "whetted by brahman", but also "very powerful" (*sahīyān*; 5,20,10); it defeats a host and conquers possessions.

In illustration of the belief that a powerful phenomenon such as fire originates in power, or, to express the same thought otherwise, that the specific power of such a phenomenon should co-operate in its creation, attention may be drawn to places such as ṚV. 1,51,10: "when Uśanas fashioned thy (i.e. Indra's) *sahas* with *sahas*"; cf. 1,52,7 where Tvaṣṭar is said to have made Indra's *śavas* greater.

The possessor of *sahas* is, further, normally supposed to be able to ward off, resist or restrain other powers or beings: Indra who deems himself unassailable boasts that "*sahas* of the gods cannot control him" (ṚV. 4,42,6).<sup>14</sup> Men implore the same deity to give them "the god-spiced *sahas*" in order to conquer their enemies (7, 25,5). Human beings are on the

<sup>11</sup> A young brāhmaṇa who after performing the ceremonial lustrations required on his finishing his studentship returns home.

<sup>12</sup> A demon of disease: Bloomfield, *The Atharva-veda*, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Bloomfield, *The Atharva-veda*, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> This connotation is not foreign to the Greek *ἔγχο*: cf. *Iliad* N 51; Y 27.



other hand able to give a god the same potency; by sacrificing and singing his praise: "I give thee, the creatively vital One, victorious power and strength (*ugrāya te saho balaṃ dadāmi*), go to meet the enemies and fell them" (10,116,5 Indra is addressed). Thus Soma, the "Mutmehr" (Geldner) of Indra's body, is placed in his arms as *sahas* and *ojas* (2,36,5), i.e. by drinking Soma Indra's victorious and creative power is enhanced; cf. also 9,97,10 where Soma "infuses" *sahas* into the god. Accordingly, Soma himself is besought to give *sahas* in battles (9,8,8; cf. 65,18). Cf. also 10,83,1 where the man who duly worships *Manyu* "den Kampfsorn", who is *sahas*, is expected to develop or increase his *sahas* and *ojas* so as to display them completely. It is not only by controlling or possessing *sahas* that Indra is a mighty warrior, but also by his being *sahas*: RV. 1,23,9 "destroy Vṛtra with Indra, who is *sahas*, as an ally" (*Indreṇa sāhasā yujā*). We should not follow Grassmann, Geldner and others in considering *sahasā* to be an adjective. RV. 5,44,6 the earth which gives room to men and heroic *sahas* combine to be a present of the gods to mankind.

In conclusion then the picture of *sahas* obtained by a consideration of the above texts is this: *sahas* is a power-substance ("Daseinsmacht") of a more or less independent or autonomous character, which is often in the possession of gods and other powerful beings or objects; it is a potency, of which they, and even men, may dispose, enabling them to be irresistible, to conquer, to gain supremacy, to resist and sustain.

In investigating the sense of terms like that under discussion, attention should be paid to the attributes and epithets accompanying them. The adjectives used by the poets of the R̥gveda in connection with *sahas* are indeed of considerable interest: *sahas* is called *apraṇīta*- "unattackable, irresistible" (RV. 5,32,7); *asādha*- (this word belongs to the same root as the noun *sahas*) "invincible, not to be overcome, indomitable" (RV. 1,55,8); *anapacyuta*- "not falling off", i.e. "undaunted, unflinching (nicht in die Flucht zu jagen, unentwegt)" (RV. 5,44,6); *duṣṭarītu*- "unconquerable" (RV. 6,1,1); *duṣṭara*- with the same meaning (RV. 2,34,7); *ariṣṭa*- "proof against damage, unhurt" (ibidem); *tura*- "pressing forwards, powerful, strong" (RV. 10,73,1); *jyeṣṭha*- (RV. 1,84,5) an adjective which deriving from the root *jyā*- "to overpower, oppress, vanquish, etc." expresses such ideas as "pre-eminent, chief, best, greatest, most excellent, etc." The number of epithets which etymologically and semantically belong to a group of words for "invincible, unconquerable, etc." is, as may appear from the above enumeration, comparatively large. The other adjectives accompanying the word *sahas* are however also of no little interest: RV. 10,50,1 it is *sumakha*- i.e. "very vigorous and liberal";

8,4,10 it is called *oṣiṣṭha*;<sup>15</sup> a term which belonging to the group *ojas*, *ugra*- etc. means something like "what is among a plurality of other ('ideas', objects, persons) (pre-eminently) characterized by being *ugra*- or possessing *ojas*," i.e. "that special vital power and creative energy which is ascribed to Indra and a number of other potent beings or entities". It may in this connection be observed that most of the epithets hitherto enumerated apply also to very powerful 'ideas', phenomena or divine personalities: Indra, *mada*- "intoxication, enthusiasm, inspiration",<sup>16</sup> the very potent soma, Indra's thunderbolt or *vajra*-, his assistants the Maruts, etc.; *asāḍha*- to Indra, Agni, Soma, Rudra, a bull, a hero etc.; *jyeṣṭha*- to Indra, Soma, Agni, intoxicating drink, glory, assistance, heroism, horses, mountains; *tura*- to Indra, the Maruts and other gods, including the lord of *brahman* (*Brahmaṇaspati*), a king, the sun, etc. etc. Other adjectives qualifying the term *sahas* are, in the R̥gveda: *uttara*- 10,84,6 where *Manyu* "spirit, temper, ardour, fury" or shortly "Wrath" – a divinity possessed of irresistible might, who glows like fire and like Indra slays Vṛtra, bestowing wealth and granting victory – is credited with a "superior, excellent, (pre-)dominant *sahas*"; *mahi* "great" (10,50,1); *bṛhat* "firm, solid, extensively powerful, spacious and firm, able to support, tough, stout": 8,15,2 it is as we have seen used in connection with Indra's *sahas*, elsewhere with his power of mind (*kratu*-) etc. The *sahas* may also be *devajuta*- "incited or inspired by the gods" (7,25,5) and *daivya*- "divine" (10,100,6): Indra's divine *sahas*. Attention may finally be drawn to the interesting fact that *sahas* is not rarely coupled with *ojas*, a similar term expressing such ideas as "creative power, vital energy, including also 'prestige', authority, etc.":<sup>17</sup> R̥V. 2,36,5 (see above) the soma which is said to enhance the courage of Indra's body (*tanvo nṛmnavardhanaḥ*) is *saha ojaḥ pradivī bāhvor hitaḥ* "is from of old placed as *s.* and *o.* in (the god's) arms"; 5,57,6 *sahas*, *ojas* and *balam* "physical strength" are stated to reside in the arms of the Maruts, courage in their heads, their weapons in their chariots, *śrī*- "well-being, prosperity, splendour"<sup>18</sup> on their bodies; 6,47,27 the *ojas* of the wood of which the chariot is made is brought (or: chosen) from sky and earth, the *sahas* from the trees; 10,83,1 that man is stated to be able to display *sahas* and *ojas* who worships *Manyu* "Rage, Kampfwut" (see above); 10,170,3 *Sūrya* has spread his

<sup>15</sup> See *Anc. Ind. ojas*, p. 13 ff., *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> See "Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view," *Numen*, 3 (1956), p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> See the author's *Ancient Indian ojas*.

<sup>18</sup> See the author's *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 193 ff.



*sahas* and *ojas* in order to see; that is to say: thanks to these powers inherent in the sun man is able to see the phenomenal world. That *ojas* and *sajas* were viewed as a complementary pair appears from TB. 3,7,9,3 *ojas ca tvā sahas ca srīñītām*, where they are put on a par with word and mind, sight and hearing etc., and from VS. 18,3 where they appear together with pre-eminence and overlordship, violence and impetuosity, height and length, etc.<sup>19</sup>

It is worth while also to review the other grammatical forms of the word *sahas*. The final dative *sahase* is used RV. 4,20,6 "Indra who is inherently strong like a mountain, *ugra-*, is forever *sahase jātaḥ*: "born with a view to conquering powerfully". Here the manifestation of *sahas* is explicitly stated to be the *raison d'être* of the god, the reason why he has been born. Similarly, 6,38,5; 10,73,1 (*janiṣṭhā ugrāḥ sahase*). The same god is also invited to drink soma *sahase* "in order to exhibit conquering power": 1,16,6; cf. 7,98,3; 104,3 (Indra and Soma); 3,51,4 (Indra). The dative is used only once in an Agni stanza, but there the root *sah-* is repeated twice: 6,1,1.

A very significant line is RV. 5,31,3 "when his *sahas* was born from *sahas* Indra exhibited all his *indriyāni* i.e. "exploits made possible by the quality which belongs especially to Indra": here there is no doubt that 1) a distinction is made between Indra's *sahas* and the god himself; 2) this *sahas* originated in *sahas*; 3) it enabled the god to perform his specific deeds, i.e. it made him what he was. Another stanza of interest is RV. 10,153,2 "Thou, Indra, hast been born from (physical) strength, from *sahas*, from *ojas*, Thou, bull, art really a bull": in the following stanzas some of his deeds – performed by means of *ojas*, a term recurring twice – are enumerated, and in the first stanza women are described as cultivating (nursing?) the god's manly vigour (*suṁīryam*) as soon as he was born.

The instrumental *sahasā* is likewise not rarely found in connection with Agni. The god, who gives youthful vitality (*vayas*) to man is said to rule, by his power called *sahas*, over many victuals (RV. 5,8,5); the meaning can scarcely be other than: by means of that special potency the god enables man to enjoy various articles of food. Agni drives rivals away *sahasā* (6,5,6); he fights with *sahas* (10,61,9). He excels others *sahasā* "in power" (5,1,8). By the *sahas* of his divinity (*devasya sahasā*) he wins the favour of the gods (5,3,10). This power-substance may also be called "divine": 10,108,9 Saramā is said to have come, urged by divine (*daivyena*) *sahas*. Agni is further explicitly stated to have been born as

<sup>19</sup> For... *ca... ca* see the author's observations in the *Mnemosyne*, IV, VII, p. 177 ff. and 265 ff. and in the periodical *Vāk* (Poona, 1957).



he "who is with regard to *sahas* most 'victoriously or overwhelmingly powerful' (*sahantamaḥ*)": 1,127,9; he is "an Macht übermächtig" (*sahasā sahasvant*:- st. 10); cf. also 6,60,1 (Agni and Indra). Most in evidence are, generally speaking, those allusions to *sahas* which occur in contexts dealing with victory, submission, domination and other great exploits: 2,17,1; 4,28,2; 7,18,13; 10,103,7 (Indra); 4,50,1 (Bṛhaspati): 6,66,9 (Maruts); cf. 1,50,13 (Sūrya). It will no doubt always remain difficult to say which sense the ancient Indian poet and his hearers attached to passages such as RV. 1,139,11 "O gods, ... eleven of whom dwell in water with their might (or rather greatness: *mahinā*)": is that might conceived here as a separate 'entity', 'idea' or 'substance', or does the line come to: "who, great, dwell..."? Or are both interpretations admissible? How should we consider passages such as RV. 1,139,27: Mitra and Varuṇa removed the untrue from the true by their *manyu*- ("ardour, zeal"), by the *manyu*- of their *dakṣa*- "skill, dexterity, strength of will". Is *dakṣa*- a power in its own right, or may the phrase be compared to similar expressions in more modern works?

We must for a moment be occupied with reviewing a word which lies within the area of the concepts discussed in this publication and the use of which is often in consonance with that of *sahas*. The term *śacī* meaning "power, energy, ability", also denotes a type of 'Daseinsmacht' which though able to enjoy a certain degree of independence, usually unites with persons. RV. 4,20,9 the poet asks by which power (*śacī*) Indra is called the most powerful one (*śaciṣṭha*-). Sky and earth are, by a great artisan, united with *śacī* (RV. 4,56,3); cf. also RV. 1,30,15. The term also denotes the special ability with which a god has performed actions passing human comprehension, e.g. RV. 6,17,6; 31,4; 1,116,22; 23; 117,13; 7,68,8; 10,157,5, or deeds of heroism: 1,103,2; 109,7; 6,26,6. As far as regards the instances quoted we cannot subscribe to Grassmann's<sup>20</sup> opinion that the instr. "bisweilen fast adverbial (verwendet wird)". In places there seem to be also reasons for questioning the correctness of Geldner's interpretations: RV. 10,104,3 *indra dhenābhir iha mādayasva dhībhir viśvābhiḥ śacyā grṇānaḥ* e.g. may mean "O Indra, do thou revel in (our) addresses, in all our eulogies, being praised with (i.e. strengthened or fortified verbally by means of) energy" rather than "... nach Kräften gepriesen". The verb *grṇāti* etc. is sometimes accompanied by an instrumental expressing that by means of which the act of praising, i.e. strengthening by uttered words is performed: 6,15,7 *agnim... girā grṇe*

<sup>20</sup> Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1371.

"I praise Agni with a eulogy"; similarly 4,29,1 *āṅgūṣebhīr grṇānaḥ* RV. 10,22,14 the earth, being allied with Indra, is related to have increased in extent *śacībhir vedyānām* "by the energy inherent in her determination". Indra, like incidentally also the Aśvins, is as a lord of the power called *śacī*: *śacīpati*-. This epithet occurs in stanzas praising the god for his heroism and martial assistance: 8,37,1; 61,5 etc. (cf. also 6,45,9), for his liberality: 4,31,7; 8,14,2. It is interesting to recall to memory that in later times this epithet was interpreted as "husband of *Śacī*" (see e.g. Mbh. 3,57,36), the god's characteristic power having become a female divinity to which he was married.<sup>21</sup>

These special applications and connotations of the term *sahas* should, in my opinion, arouse our suspicion with regard to the interpretation of the word when used in connection with kindling fire, as mere physical strength of human beings. The main passage adduced in favour of this view, RV. 6,48,5 *sahasā yo mathito jāyate nṛbhiḥ*, is usually translated like this: "der mit Gewalt von den Männern gerieben erzeugt wird" (Geldner); cf. Sāyaṇa *balena mathitaḥ san*. It seems however possible to interpret it as follows: "(Agni) who is generated, being produced (churned) by men with the co-operation, or by help of, or in conjunction with, the super-human power-substance *sahas*". If this view is right the underlying 'theory' must have been based on the consideration that a man and his physical strength are by no means able to produce a god or potency of Agni's rank. Only the co-operation, or conjunction, of that special principle which seems to have been central in the descriptions of Agni's character, his power of subjugation, his overwhelming power, can lead to the result desired, the appearance of sparks and the generation of fire. This view of the process of generating fire, especially of sacred fire, if true, is in harmony with the results of modern anthropological research. The so-called primitive is convinced that various kinds of disaster would destroy gardens made or fields tilled without rites and without the co-operation of higher powers. This does not mean that he attributes all good results to rites and higher power, that he would neglect to work himself and to apply technical methods.<sup>22</sup> In this connection attention should be drawn to Śat.Br. 8,6,3,8 where the *gārhapatyā*- pile is said to be a womb, and success in a womb is described as consisting of seed (and) generative power: *yonir vai gārhapatyā citir eṣo vai yone rāddhir yad retaḥ prajātiḥ*. The asyndeton is copulative; *prajāti*-, for the sense of which ibid. 11,1,6,7 may be compared (*sa ātmany eva prajātim adhatta*

<sup>21</sup> See also E. W. Hopkins, *Epic mythology* (Strassburg, 1915), p. 50.

<sup>22</sup> See B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion* (New York, 1954), p. 28.



"he (Prajāpati) laid the power of reproduction into his self") seems to be an 'abstract noun' here, although it elsewhere stands for "generation, delivery".

It should, in this connection, also be borne in mind that the very idea of "being born" is in these texts often used in a somewhat 'metaphorical' sense. When a poet says that the god has been generated as a destroyer of enemies (RV. 3,49,1) he no doubt means to say figuratively that the god is constituted.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV

We now have to deal at some length with a point which has already been alluded to on one of the foregoing pages. Like other peoples<sup>1</sup> the ancient Indians were keenly aware of the parallelism existing between kindling fire by means of a drill or pieces of wood and the sexual act:<sup>2</sup> the fire-sticks are Agni's parents, the upper being the male and the lower the female: RV. 3,29,3; cf. 1,127,11; 5,9,3 f, etc. It is therefore not surprising that the Indians with their highly developed sense of discovering parallels and relations between the greatest variety of phenomena in nature and human life made, in elaborating a theory of generation and conception,<sup>3</sup> allusions to the generation of fire, and that their opinions with regard to the latter creative act can, to a certain extent, be elucidated by an insight into their views of the former.

Throughout the history of Indian thought the Indian concept of the human body is characterized by the conviction that it is a manifestation of divine energy and substance. A similar opinion is fostered with regard to the universe. The principal of those powers and faculties which reside in the body, giving it life, constituting its structure and faculties are

<sup>23</sup> See also Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 57.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. G. Landtman and A. C. Haddon, *The Kiwan Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 36. Cf. also W. Crooke, *Religion and folklore of N. India* (Oxford, 1926), p. 336; J. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the origin of Kings*, II, p. 208 f.; the same, *Mythes sur l'origine du feu* (Paris, 1931), p. 62 f.; G. Bachelard, *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris, 1938), passim.

<sup>2</sup> See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 91; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, II, p. 208 ff.; cf. e.g. AthV. 6,11,1 and Kauś. Sū. 35,8 where fire is generated between *śamī* and *aśvattha*-wood in a rite for conception of a son, the text stating that the contact between the pieces of wood is the generation of a son. Cf. also K. F. Johansson, *Über die altindische Götter Dhiṣṇā und Verwandtes*, *Skr. Hum. Vet. Samf. Uppsala*, 20,1 (Uppsala, 1917), p. 51 ff.; A. Minard, *Trois énigmes sur les cent chemins*, II (Paris, 1956), p. 95 (§ 231 a).

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. R. Thurnwald, *Des Menschegeistes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren* (Berlin, 1951), p. 56 ff.; 289.



counterparts of the powers pervading the universe.<sup>4</sup> "All divinities have their abode in man, as cows in a cow-pen" (AthV. 11,8,32). "Therefore", the same stanza says, "one who knows man, thinks this is brahman." The body was, indeed, believed to be an abode of all the manifestations of the creative principle and other potencies which exist in the cosmos. Thus the quintessence of the seven 'elements' or essential constituents is called *ojas* (cf. Vāgbhaṭa, Aṣṭāṅghṛdaya 11,37);<sup>5</sup> as might be expected it is the bearer of the vital function: when it perishes, man passes away.

The creation of a living being, moreover, does not, according to these views, result from a mere physiological process. Beside the father and the mother a third factor is indispensable, the *gandharva*- or *sattva*- i.e. a 'Seelenwesen' or soul previous to its being born again, the most essential component of the new creature. This third element co-operates in an inconspicuous way<sup>6</sup> in the act of creation, driven by the karma. The terms denoting this 'Seelenwesen' are not devoid of interest: *gandharva*- is on the one hand a demigod presiding over child-conception, having a special power over unmarried women, on the other hand a being in charge of the heavenly Soma; *sattva*- is a word in which combine such meanings as "true essence, sentient being, rudiment of life etc.". If such a 'Seelenwesen' has, in a previous life, been a god, it is also called, in Buddhist texts, a *devaputto* (cf. e.g. Milindapañho, p. 126). This name is interesting, because the 'Seelenwesen' is not "a son of a god" in the literal sense of the term. Another term is *nāmarūpa* "individuality" (lit. "name and form").<sup>7</sup> In describing the process of 'incarnation' of such a *sattva*- at the moment of conception Vāgbhaṭa's manual of medicine states that it becomes an embryo because of the combination of the relevant factors, like fire in the kindling-sticks (Aṣṭāṅgh., Śār.).

In view of these theories it is therefore not surprising to find that a divine being like Agni was in a way already pre-existent when being generated by a pair of kindling-sticks; that a third factor, apparently denoted by the term *sahas* was essential in the process of producing a new fire.

Some references from the texts collected at random may be added

<sup>4</sup> See E. Windisch, *Buddha's Geburt* (Leipzig, 1908), p. 12 ff.; J. Jolly, *Medicine* (Strassburg, 1901) (*Grundriss Indo-Ar. Phil. u. Alt.*), §§ 39; 41; H. R. Zimmer, *Hindu medicine* (Baltimore, 1948), ch. II. It may be observed that this concept of the body as an assemblage of divine powers had its place also in Indian zoology.

<sup>5</sup> L. Hilgenberg and W. Kirfel, *Vāgbhaṭa's Aṣṭāṅghṛdaya-saṃhita* (Leiden, 1941), p. 66; see also *Ancient-Indian ojas*, p. 44 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Vāgbhaṭa, *o.c.*, Sū. 1,3; for a detailed discussion see Windisch, *l.c.*

<sup>7</sup> M. Falk, *Nāma-rūpa and dharma-rūpa* (Calcutta, 1943).

here, in which the idea of birth is prominent and relevant to our subject. AV. 9,5,13 – a collection of stanzas extolling the sacrificial goat –: "the goat verily was born from the heat of the fire, wise, of the wise, of power, he the inspired one" (*ajo hy agner ajanīṣṭa śokād vipro viprasya sahaso vipaścit*). It is clear that the fire and the power are identical, or rather, are two aspects of Agni's nature, that the term *vipra*- likewise refers to this divine power which is often described as "wise",<sup>8</sup> that the goat by being prepared in the fire comes to participate in the essential qualities of the fire: cf. the second half of the stanza: "let the gods prepare what is offered and bestowed". The former part of this line recurs AV. 4,14,1 (VS. 13,51 etc.) "since the goat has been born from the heat of the fire, it saw (its) generator in the beginning". The importance of the animal – whose name can also be explained as "the unborn one" – is evident from the following words: "by it the gods in the beginning attained (their) divinity". Whatever ideas the Indians associated with these texts, so much is clear that the heat of the fire, i.e. an 'impersonal power' was the ultimate foundation of the divinity of 'personal beings'. At a later period the truth of the same conceptions is still widely accepted. In enumerating the different forms of fire – all sprung from the body of Aṅgiras – the author of Mbh. 3,220,7 for instance relates that Indra was born from the *bala*- "physical force" of the creator.

It would lead too far to enumerate here also statements such as Śat.Br. 5,4,1,14 "he places that gold plate upon his head, saying "*ojas* are you, victory (*sahas*) are you, immortality (*amṛtam*) are you". Gold being immortal life (*amṛtam āyuh*), he thus places immortal life into him." Such passages, well known to every reader of the brāhmaṇas, likewise presuppose the possibility of life springing from life-less power or powerful substance. A similar remark applies to the likewise common idea that the power-substances of a powerful being go away from him transforming themselves into a living being, e.g. Śat.Br. 12,7,1 ff.: after having slain Viśvarūpa and desecrated the sacrifice Indra's specific energy or vital power (*indriyaṃ vīryam*) flowed away from every limb...; (8) "from his urine his *ojas* flowed away and became the wolf..., from his blood his *sahas* flowed away and became the lion, the lord of the wild beasts". Elsewhere (see M.S. 4,3,9: 49,4; P.B. 18,9,1; T.B. 1,8,2,4) it is told that Varuṇa's "lustre" (*bharga*-) or "force and strength" (*indriyaṃ vīryam*) departed from him after he had been consecrated. The author of the Jaim. Br. 2,201 relates that the sixteen kinds of water with which Varuṇa

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. RV. 1,14,2; 150,3.



had been consecrated, drove away his *bharga*-, which was divided into four parts. Ai.B. 3,26,3 the viper is said to have arisen from the victorious power (*sahas*) of the arrow with which a guardian of the soma shot Gāyatrī who would fetch that draught.

Speculations about the birth, origin or birth-place of exalted beings are not rare. It was of the utmost importance to know the origin of a god, because just like knowledge of a being's name or nature, acquaintance with his birth-place enables the person who knows, to control that being, or to make it subservient. Or knowledge of its origin was regarded as the key to an understanding of a being's nature and essence.<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. AV. 6,46,2 (used in rites against evil dreams: "we know thy place of birth (*janitram*), O dream!"; 13,3,21 (to the sun) "we know, O Agni, thy birth-place to be threefold" (this stanza is followed by a refrain containing an imprecation upon an evil-doer). Agni derives his origin not only from stone or wood, but also from water (RV. 2,1,1). A pearl-shell amulet invoked to protect man from distress (*aṃhas*) is, in one and the same short text (AV. 4,10), repeatedly described as being born from light, wind, sky, or ocean; in the last stanza the god's bone is said to have become pearl, entering the waters and possessing a 'soul'. In AV. 4,10,1 and 4 the amulet is stated to be "gold-born" (*hiranyajāḥ*). The brahmācārīn or Veda student, like the officiating priest, is born from the brahman (AV. 11,5,5; 19,42,1), the sun from the eye of the Primeval Being (Puruṣa: 19,6,7). The gods in general – who RV. 1,106,3 are called sons of Heaven and Earth – were according to the Śat.Br. 6,1,2,11 created by Prajāpati's upper vital airs after he had become pregnant by eating vegetable food; in 11,1,6,7 the same work maintains that they were created on entering the sky (*div-*: *deva-* "gods"), or that they owed their origin to *brahman* (neuter) which, after having created them, made them move into these worlds. Indra, whose birth is often alluded to is RV. 4,18,10 spoken of as having been a calf, born from a cow; 10,111,2 he is a bull, and the offspring of a cow. According to 6,59,2 he has the same father as Agni, who is the son of Heaven and Earth. This seems to be in harmony with what may be inferred from 10,120,1 where it is stated that "among the worlds that was the highest (*jyeṣṭham*) from which this fierce one (= Indra)

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. W. Ruben, *Über die Debatten in den alten Upanishads*, ZDMG, 83 (1929), p. 238 ff.; St. Schayer, "Die Struktur der magischen Weltanschauung", *Zs. f. Buddhismus*, 6, p. 298 ff. – Sometimes the relationship mentioned in the text needs no comment: Uṣas is for instance considered the daughter of the sky: RV. 1,30,22 (*duhitar divaḥ*); 48,8; 9; 49,2; the Maruts are born from the interior or the udders of the sky (RV. 1,134,4); Agni from dry wood (RV. 1,68,3); compare e.g. also Geldner's observation on RV. 1,37,9 (Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda übersetzt*, I, p. 47).

was born".<sup>10</sup> From these and similar passages it is clearly to be concluded that the points of agreement observed in the above paragraphs between Agni and Indra found their mythological expression in a genealogical relationship between these gods. Elsewhere, however, different accounts are given of Indra's origin: from a comparison of RV. 2,17,6;<sup>11</sup> 3,48,2; 4; 4,18,3; 12 we may infer that Tvaṣṭar, the skilful shaper of forms who is elsewhere described as being associated with him<sup>12</sup> and who had fashioned his *vajra*- or thunderbolt, was also regarded as Indra's father. That means that the god and his main attribute, the *vajra*-, had the same origin. Indra is associated with the horse, two tawny steeds drawing his chariot: Tvaṣṭar is the god who produced the swift horse (VS. 29,9) and gave it speed (AV. 6,92,1). The incidental statement that Soma was the generator of Indra (RV. 9,96,5) must be connected with the god's well-known indulgence in the draught of life, which stimulates him to perform great cosmic and warlike deeds. Being so essential to him that he drank it on the very day of his birth,<sup>13</sup> the soma draught may be said to enable Indra to give full scope to his natural abilities.

Attention may also be drawn to a god's being a child of *ṛta*-. RV. 1,156,3 Viṣṇu is said to be the first issue of *ṛta*:- *pūrvyam... ṛtasya garbham*, a statement which can hardly be disconnected from st. 2 which describes the god's birth as great or noble (*mahī*). Agni is RV. 10,5,7 called the first-born child of *ṛta*-.<sup>14</sup> Of similar practical use was knowledge of a being's relations: AV. 6,46,2 (the evil dream is addressed): "thou art the son of the gods' female relatives (sisters, *jāmi*-), thou art end-maker, death; thus, O dream, do we comprehend thee here". Birth-place and relationship combine, e.g. AV. 16,5,1 "we know thy birth-place, O dream, thou art the son of seizure (*grāhi*-), agent of Yama, ender art thou, death art thou; thus, O dream, do we comprehend thee here; do thou, O dream, protect us from evil-dreaming". The plant *kuṣṭha*- is "born from the gods and soma's companion" (5,4,7; cf. 19,39,5). Cf. also RV. 1,163,1; 4; 166,13. Thus the god Varuṇa, "who has generated father Atharvan", who is a relative of the gods (*devabandhum*), is (AV. 5,11,11) called a comrade and the highest connection of those speaking.

It is therefore an attractive supposition that some other places in the Veda must also be explained in conformity with the above considerations.

<sup>10</sup> For other particulars see Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> See also Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda übersetzt*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 298.

<sup>12</sup> Macdonell, p. 116 f.

<sup>13</sup> Macdonell, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. also H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I (Göttingen, 1951), p. 23.



RV. 1,96,1 *sa pratnathā sahasā jāyamānaḥ*: "he (Agni) born, as of old, with (the co-operation of) – which may also mean: "together with" – *sahas*";<sup>15</sup> 6,44,22 *ayaṃ devaḥ sahasā jāyamānaḥ* "this god born etc.",<sup>16</sup> and in a similar way, 1,98,2 *vaiśvānaraḥ sahasā prṣṭaḥ* "(Agni) V. was sought etc."<sup>17</sup>

It seems possible to say that this explication is in substantial consonance with other passages in which a verb for "being born" is accompanied by an instrumental of a word for a power-substance: RV. 1,130,9 "(Indra) pulled away the wheel of the sun (having been) born with *ojas*" (*śūraś cakram pra vrhaj jāta ojasā*). Here Geldner also translates: "der mit Kraft geborene". We can hardly err in supposing the thought underlying these words to be: "Indra, the god who is, more than others, characterized by the power-substance *ojas*, possessed this 'quality' from his very birth"; existing before his birth it essentially co-operated in his creating, making him what he is, viz. Indra, the *ugra*- (i.e. possessed of *ojas*) One. A similar passage is RV. 8,99,3 *vasūni jāte janamāna ojasā prati bhāgaṃ na didhima*, occurring in a hymn dedicated to Indra whose beneficent activity has, in the former half of this stanza, been compared to that of the sun. In contradistinction to Geldner<sup>18</sup> who supplies *sūrye* and takes *jāte janamāne* "wohl metri causa für *jāte jāte*" I feel tempted to regard *janamāna ojasā* (sc. Indra, who is by far the main possessor of *ojas*, whereas neither this substantive nor the adjective are,<sup>19</sup> in the R̥gveda, used in special connection with Sūrya) the locative of the subject, *jāte* the predicate: "when (since) (the god) who is born with *ojas* has been born we expect wealth as (it were) our allotment".

Similar passages are: RV. 1,11,4 where Indra is described as having been born *amitaujāḥ*, "of unmeasured creative force"; 2,22,3 *sākam jātaḥ kratunā sākam ojasā vavakṣītha sākam vṛddho vīryaiḥ*, where the addition of *sākam* leaves no doubt about the special function of the instrumental: "being born together with (Thy) mental power, Thou (i.e. Indra) hast grown together with *ojas*, grown together with manly heroism". Deriving from the same 'root' as *sam*<sup>20</sup> – which expresses the idea of

<sup>15</sup> "durch Kraft geboren" Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 125; *balena nirmathanenotpadyamānaḥ* Sayana.

<sup>16</sup> "unter Kraftanstrengung" Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> "Mit Kraft" bei dem Ausreiben aus dem Reibholz" Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 127; more or less adverbial according to Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1499.

<sup>18</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 426 f.

<sup>19</sup> With the exception of RV. 10,170,3 where the sun is stated to spread *sahas* and *ojas*.

<sup>20</sup> See also Renou, *Gramm. de la langue védique*, p. 331 (§ 391, rem.).

*ekībhāva*- "combination", i.e. not only "joining together", but also "forming a whole or unity"<sup>21</sup> – *sākam* is especially used to emphasize simultaneity of processes of a complementary character: RV. 1,47,7 where the *Aśvins*, who are matutinal gods, are invited to come together with, and at the same time as, the first rays of the sun; 1,137,2; partnership: 1,161,2 "You will be worthy of worship together with the gods"; 1,179,2; cf. also 3,51,9 Indra together with the *Maruts*, who are his intimate allies and associates; simultaneity and association: 10,97,13 where a disease is asked to disappear together with a certain bird, the whirling of the wind and the rainstorm: the meaning of this exorcism no doubt is that the bird and the natural phenomena must carry away the disease.<sup>22</sup> A statement like that found in 1,166,13 "(the *Maruts*) appeared together with (their) marvellous power (*sākam daṁsanaiḥ*)" is not essentially different, the *daṁsana*- being a power-substance credited with the ability of leading an independent existence, though it may like other 'Daseinsmächte' intimately associate with various beings and form one of their faculties or capacities.<sup>23</sup> That this inference is legitimate may also appear from 10,73,6: Indra slew *Namuci* together with<sup>24</sup> his internal foundation (*sākam pratiṣṭhā hr̥dyā jagantha*): whether this "foundation"<sup>25</sup> refers to *Namuci*'s wives or to a special feature in his character – which may, or may not, have depended on these women – is in this connection a matter of indifference. Compare also AV. 1,11,6 etc. It is therefore in accordance with Vedic usage to say that *Soma*, the intoxicating draught, goes, together with its intoxication (*sākam madenā*) and delight to *Vāyu*, *Indra* and the *Aśvins* (9,7,7); that the poet has waked up together with divine speech (*devyā sākam vācā*, 8,9,16); that the chariots of the *Maruts* came into existence together and in association with, at the same time as, the aspects of their manhood (courage) and virility (*sākam nṛmṇaiḥ paum̐syebhiś ca* 6,66,2); that the same deities were born *sākam* their dappled mares, their spears, axes and ornaments (1,37,2).

A similar relation between a being which is regarded as animate and a power-substance is, as has already become clear from part of the above instances, also denoted without the 'preposition' *sākam*. In a rather

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the author's *Reflections on the numerals 'one' and 'two' in ancient I.-E. languages* (Utrecht, 1953), p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. also RV. 10,165; AthV. 6,27-29.

<sup>23</sup> I refer to H. von Glasenapp, *Entwicklungsstufen des Indischen Denkens* (Halle, 1940), p. 9 ff.

<sup>24</sup> In spite of Renou, *Gramm. védique*, p. 219, § 268, rem. 2.

<sup>25</sup> For *pratiṣṭhā* see the author's article in *Samjñāvyākaraṇam, Studia Indol. Intern.*, I (Poona-Paris, 1954), for the interpretation of this line cf. also Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 253.



obscure text, RV. 10,31, it reads (st. 5): "...when those abounding in food came together with (their heroic) power" (*yad dha kṣumantaḥ śavasā samāyan*); in 1,64,8 the poet enlarging upon the behaviour of the Maruts relates that they were accompanied by or connected with (*sam*) their dappled mares, spears and *śavas*; in st. 9 they are invited to address Rodaṣī together with their *śavas*. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the mutual relation between a divine personality and a power-substance in 10,178,3 (cf. also 4,38,10), where the illustrious steed Tārksya (or Dadhikrā) is celebrated as having expanded (or extended his influence) over, with, or by means of, the five nations like the sun with its rays over the waters (*yaḥ śavasā pañca kṛṣṣiḥ sūrya iva jyotiṣāpas tatāna*). Here the *śavas* may be assumed to be related to Tārksya as light is to the sun, that is to say: whilst diffusing light the sun, the source and bearer of light, exhibits its special capacity which is an inherent part of its nature, whilst using its *śavas* the steed shows that this very heroic power is the essential characteristic of its personality.

Similar remarks could be made in connection with other terms of the same semantic category. RV. 1,55,6 Indra who is often stated to possess *ojas* (cf. e.g. RV. 3,36,4; 5,33,6) for instance described as gaining, on the earth, in *ojas*: *kṣmayā vṛdhāna ojasā*; 1,130,4 the same god is stated to have wrapped himself in *ojas*, heroic powers and majesty: *samvivyāna ojasā śavobhir indra majmanā*; and in st. 9 he is *jāta ojasā* "born with *ojas*". A remarkable passage is for instance also RV. 2,22,3 *sākam jātaḥ kratunā sākam ojasā vavakṣitha sākam vṛddho vīryaiḥ sāsahir mṛdhaḥ* "born together with (thy) mental power, thou hast grown up together with (thine) *ojas*, having increased together with (thy) virile powers, conquering the adversaries..."; the repeated *sākam* removes any doubt about the character of the communication: the birth and growth of the divine being on the one hand and those of his 'attributes' on the other hand are viewed as different, but simultaneous and closely allied occurrences.

Passing mention may be made here of the term *kratu-* which seems to denote something like "mental power, intelligence". RV. 1,19,2 speaks of Agni's *kratu*; 1,2,8 Mitra and Varuṇa are stated to have gained "a solid mental power" (*kratum bṛhantum*, a phrase very difficult to translate<sup>26</sup>) by means of, or through, *ṛta-*; Indra is often styled *Śatakratu-* "the one characterized by a hundred-fold *kratu-*, but RV. 1,17,5 the statement is made that Indra and Varuṇa are *kratu-*; *indraḥ sahasradāv-*

<sup>26</sup> For *bṛhat-* see my *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 31 ff.

*nāṃ varuṇaḥ śaṃsyānām | kratuḥ bhavaty ukthyaḥ*: there is reason for some doubt as to the correctness of Geldner's translation: "I. and V. sind der preisliche Rat (i.e. Ratgeber, βουλευφόρος) der rühmlichen Tausendschenker".<sup>27</sup> Gods are, indeed, not infrequently said to be *kratu-*: Agni 1,77,3 *sa hi kratuḥ*, Indra 10,104,10.

V

Special attention may parenthetically be drawn to a number of texts intimating that Agni was also a possessor of *ojas*, "vital or creative energy":<sup>1</sup> ṚV. 1,127,3 the god is depicted as radiating with brilliant *ojas*, overcoming the injurious demons, but, though victorious, he may be controlled; in 4 the poet emphasizes the god's ability to scatter even what is firm and solid by his innate vitality: here his *ojas* evidently consists in his "fiery energy" (= *tejas Sāyana*). As soon as he is born Agni gives evidence of his *ojas* (= *tejas Sāyana*), when the wind blows upon (or: after) his flames. 8,75,10 men pay homage to this *ojas* of the god. It may in this connection be recalled that Agni gives sons to his worshippers (ṚV. 1,1,3; 12,11; 2,2,12; 4,8); that he also protects the unborn child (1,31,12); cf. also 2,9,2. He gives youthful or physical strength (ṚV. 1,73,1 *vayodhāḥ*); 2,4,9 he is implored to give this *vayas*.

It may be remembered that, according to quotations adduced on other pages (e.g. AV. 7,89,4) a divine power is often requested to give what he is, i.e. to increase or enrich the person praying with part of his own essence, to make him participate in it. Agni nourishes all beings (1,73,3; cf. 31,10), his worshippers expect a full span of life from him (st. 5; 9); his favour means life (1,79,9).

It is worth recalling that there are other fire gods who maintain relations with fertility. The Roman Volcanus who is identical with the Etruscan Velchanus, moreover, concerned with water.<sup>2</sup> The intimate connections between the earthly fire and the heavenly source of light and heat have already in early times led man to associate fire and fertility or vegetation.<sup>3</sup>

Here we may dwell for a moment on some data borrowed from the Atharvaveda which throw some light on the ancient Indian views of the

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 322.

<sup>1</sup> For the term see also G. Tucci, "Earth in India and Tibet", *Erano-Jahrbuch*, 22 (Zürich, 1954), p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> The reader may be referred to the bibliography presented by A. Grenier, *Les religions étrusque et romaine*, *Mana* II, 3 (Paris, 1948), p. 126 f.

<sup>3</sup> For fire ceremonies etc. see also A. Audin, *Les fêtes solaires* (Paris, 1945).



relations between potencies. In a text included in the Paippalāda recension of this veda (6,5) a considerable number of complementary 'concepts' – connected with ... *ca* ... *ca* – pass in review: heaven and earth, sun and moon, day and night, cow and bull, Mitra and Varuṇa, *brahma* and *kṣatram*; among them are, however, in addition to inspiration and expiration, death and freedom from death (*amṛta*-), truth and untruth, also Indra and Indra's might (*indriya*-). The conclusion must be that Indra and *indriya*-, the bearer of a specific potency and that potency itself constitute a complete whole. This inference is corroborated by the following line in which the hero and heroism (*vīraś ca vīryam ca*) are stated to constitute a similar complementary pair. It is clear that a mighty person and his specific might were – like a god and his *śakti*- in later times, when the latter was considered his spouse – conceived as a kind of 'unité-dualité', as a pair of complements forming unity.

That a being which is, or represents, a power is expected to give or diffuse it, is apparent from AthV. Śaun. 2,17; cf. e.g. st. 2 "you are *sahas*, give me *sahas*". In a text to be recited in order to be successful in mounting a war-chariot (AthV. 6,125) the *ojas* of this vehicle is stated to have been brought from heaven and earth, its *sahas* from the trees; it is difficult not to remember the intimate connection between *sahas* and fire, which is born in wood (e.g. RV. 6,3,3 *vanejāh*), distributed in the vegetable kingdom (RV. 10,1,2), having entered into all plants (RV. 8,43,9), and which is therefore called the embryo of trees and plants (RV. 1,70,3) to which he owes his existence (RV. 2,1,1).

"All those (demons and other enemies) I overpower (*sahe*) with *sahas*" (AV. 4,36,3; 4); "whatever village this potent (efficacious, *ugram*) *sahas* of mine (notice this phrase) enters, from that the *piśācas* disappear". Similarly, plants are said to have *sahas*, manly heroism and strength (AthV. 8,7,5).

In connection with an amulet to which an appeal is made to endow a person with splendour (*varcas*), *sahas*, *ojas* etc. (AthV. 19,37,2) these potencies are said to have come from Agni. That men tried to utilize Agni's conquering power appears from texts such as AthV. 7,34 and 35, cf. e.g. 35,1 "overpower away with power (our) rivals" (Whitney-Lanman) (*pra... sapatnān sahasā sahasva*). AV. 2,29,3 *sahas* is "victorious power" in a military sense: "(let) this man conquer fields with *sahas*, O Indra". That the power called *sahas* was closely connected with *ojas* and *śavas* "heroism" and enabled its bearer to overcome all opposition is also apparent from AV. 7,25,3 and 4: here Viṣṇu and Varuṇa are stated to be "lords, unopposed, by their powers (*sahobhiḥ*)". AV. 8,4,3 *manyumac*

*chavaḥ* "furious heroism" is expected to serve to overpower enemies (sorcerers, demons): *sahasē*.

That there exists an intimate relation between Agni and *sahas* may also appear from an interesting passage in the Kauṣītaki-brāhmaṇa-upaniṣad, viz. 4,9. Dealing with a progressive determination of brahman and its presence in various cosmic phenomena the author states that the person (*puruṣa-*) in lightning is considered as "the self (essence: *ātman-*) of light",<sup>4</sup> the person in the thunder as the self of sound; the person in the wind as Indra Vaikuṇṭha,<sup>5</sup> the unconquered army (Vāyu indeed shatters everything: R.V. 10,168,1) etc. In a similar way a correlation is established between the sun and a supreme position, between the moon (which is a receptacle of soma, the food of the gods and king of plants) and food, and between fire and a term deriving from the root *sah-*, viz. *viśāsahi-* "the vanquisher, or the victorious One".<sup>6</sup> The man, it is added, who regards the "person in the fire" as such becomes a vanquisher (*viśāsahi-*) among others.

The above passage is in perfect harmony with those statements which in earlier texts refer to Agni's superior power: R.V. 10,176,4 "this Agni wishes to reach width (space)<sup>7</sup> away from his birth as from 'immortality'. The god, who is more *sahas* than even *sahas* itself, has been created in order to live":<sup>8</sup> *ayam agnir uruṣyaty amṛtād iva janmanaḥ | sahasaś cid sahīyān devo jīvātave kṛtaḥ*. There is, as far as I am able to see, no point in considering with Geldner, the word *sāhas* (accent!) as referring to a personal being: "der Gewaltige". The meaning appears to be that Agni expanding, "going away" from his birth which may be regarded as 'immortality', i.e. continuance of life,<sup>9</sup> will live, being more *sahas* than even the principle of *sahas* itself: in estimating the value of the phrase *sāhasaś cid sahīyān* the predilection of Vedic poets for 'Ausdrucksverstärkung' of this sort should be taken into account.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Thus the *varia lectio* (Ānand. Skt. Ser.).

<sup>5</sup> See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 107 f.

<sup>6</sup> Explained by *vividhā-sahana-śīlāḥ* "disposed or accustomed to various powerful exploits or forbearances" or *duḥsahāḥ* "irresistible".

<sup>7</sup> For this important idea see my article on *aphas*, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (The Hague, 1957), p. 33-60.

<sup>8</sup> The ablative – see Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 398 – can hardly be other than purely separative. See also Renou, *Grammaire védique*, p. 350 (§ 410).

<sup>9</sup> For the idea of *amṛta-* see P. Thieme, *Studien zur indogermanischen Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), p. 15 ff.

<sup>10</sup> See H. Oertel, *Sitzungsberichte München*, 1937, 3; J. Gonda, *Stilistische Studie over Atharvaveda* (Wageningen, 1938), p. 69 f.



Now, are Grassmann, Roth, Geldner<sup>11</sup> correct in ascribing to *sāhas* n. also the adjectival meaning of "powerful, victorious"? A brief survey of the relevant texts seems to show that there are grounds for believing that this 'adjective' really is the substantive *sahas* used as an opposition. Cf. ṚV. 1,23,9: "Slay, (O Maruts), Vṛtra with the victorious power, Indra, as an associate" (*indreṇa sahasā yujā*): "mit dem starken I." (Geldner), *balavatā* (Sāyaṇa); 10,83,1 "we would subdue the Dāsas ... with Thee as an associate, (who art) produced from conquering power, c. p., possessed of c. p." (*sahaskṛtena sahasā sahasvatā*): here Geldner's translation is in accordance with the above view: "mit der ... macht-vollen Macht" (*sahamānena parān* Sāyaṇa). That Manyu, the victorious spirit of battle,<sup>12</sup> is called "conquering power" is in harmony with st. 2 and 3 where *tapas* "ardour", a noun like *sāhas*, is called his ally (*tapasā yujā*).<sup>13</sup> As already observed ṚV. 10,176,4 the correctness of Geldner's interpretation of *sahasā cid sahiyān*: "gewaltiger als selbst der Gewaltige" may in my opinion be questioned. Even 7,56,19 *sāhaḥ sāhasa ā namanti* may mean "they subdue the power of power": cf. the 'intensive' (ausdrucksverstärkende) phrases of the type *satyasya satyam* "the real of the real" (e.g. Taitt. S. 1,6,1 b), i.e. "the highest degree of reality, the *realissimum*".

As is well known the I.-E. nouns in *-es/-os* not rarely denoted persons believed to represent the 'power-substance' or 'idea' indicated by that noun. In Greek *ἄγος* "guilt"<sup>14</sup> can refer to "a criminal"; Odysseus was called *μέγας κῶδος Ἀχαιῶν* "great glory of the A."; in Latin *scelus* could stand for "a scoundrel"; *venus* not only denotes the idea of "charm" or "loveliness", but also "the goddess of love". Indian parallels are not wanting: ṚV. 10,61,14 Agni, the god, and *bhargas*, the power-substance "radiance", are expressly stated to be identical: "who art Bhargas by name, who art Agni by name" (*bhargo ha nāmota yasya ... agnir ha nāmota*). Mbh. 13,104,62 fire, the cow, the brahman are called three *tejāṇsi* "manifestations of *tejas*, important beings or entities specifically characterized by the possession of, by being *tejas*". To persons being

<sup>11</sup> Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1499; Roth, *Petr. Dict.*, VII, 866 f.; Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda übersetzt*, passim; also Renou, *Gramm. védique* (Paris, 1952), § 200.

<sup>12</sup> See also M. Bloomfield, *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa*, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> In st. 3 Manyu is styled "stronger than the strong One" (*tavāsa tāviyān*), another indication of the absence of hard and fast border-lines between personal and impersonal entities.

<sup>14</sup> See now P. Chantraine and O. Masson, "La valeur du mot *ἄγος* et de ses dérivés" in *Sprachgeschichte und Wortbedeutung, Festschrift A. Debrunner* (Bern, 1954), p. 85 ff.

called *tejāṃsi* we might no doubt apply the definition suggested by Kālidāsa's words (Śak. 7,15) *mahatas tejaso bījaṃ bālo 'yaṃ pratibhāti me* "the boy appears to me to contain within himself the germ of mighty fiery energy". ṚV. 2,29,2 the gods are addressed as follows: "Ye are 'care' (*pramati-*), ye are *ojas*"; the term *pramati-* is often applied to beings which are conceived personally: ṚV. 1,31,9 Agni is implored to be the bodily generator and "care" of the poet.

With regard to *dveṣas* Grassmann already observed that both meanings, viz. "Hass, Feindschaft" and "Feind, Hasser", "vielfach in einander überspielen".<sup>15</sup> It seems indeed arbitrary to translate this word 1,48,8; 2,27,7 always by the 'abstract' "Anfeindungen" and 2,6,4; 9,29,4 by "enemies": *dveṣas* too means the 'Daseinsmacht' "hostility", which may assume concrete forms, *inter alia*, in a human or super-human being; it may, moreover, belong to a person: 8,79,4 *aghasya dveṣaḥ* "the hostility of the sinful man", it can be produced, or made active and attach itself to a man: cf. 4,10,7. The term *dakṣas*, which admits of such translations as "ability, spirit, thoroughness" or "Tüchtigkeit" and which, in point of fact, also denotes a power-substance, is ṚV. 6,48,1 used on a par with the term Agni to refer to the god of fire: *yajñā yajñā vo agnaye girā girā ca dakṣase* "with every act of worship and every song (addressed) to Agni, (who is) ability" (or if such should be preferred in an English translation: "the able one").<sup>16</sup> The same god is, according to 2,1,11, to realize *dakṣas* (*asi dakṣase*), and in 8,13,1 Indra is said to "become conscious of his great *dakṣas*, for he is great". Again the same relations: a divine being is a power-substance, *has* it, and *is to realize it*.

Very significant is also the usage related to *rakṣas*. In contradistinction to the above-mentioned *sāhas* a form *rakṣās* – which in accordance to a well-known rule of accentuation<sup>17</sup> is 'adjectival' and *nomen agentis* – exists beside *rākṣas*, the former referring to persons or at least to entities credited with the ability of manifesting the power-concept *rakṣas*, the latter, however, not necessarily denoting impersonal 'ideas'.

Although this term conveys the sense of "evil, harm" – cf. e.g. ṚV. 7,104,23 *mā no rakṣo abhi naḍ yātumāvatām* "let the harm done by the 'sorcerers' not reach us" – it must very often be rendered by "demon" rather than "harm". Being the most famous of all classes of Vedic 'evil spirits' the *rakṣas* often appear as dogs, owls or other animals, but

<sup>15</sup> Grassmann, *o.c.*, 653.

<sup>16</sup> Anyhow, Geldner's "... (wollen wir) es dem Agni zu Dank machen" does not seem acceptable (Geldner, *o.c.* II, p. 147); *dakṣase: pravṛddhāya* Sāyana.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Wackernagel-Debrunner, *o.c.*, II, 2, p. 231.



they can also assume the form of a human being or appear as a 'demon'. Thus a *rakṣas* is said to be killed: RV. 9,97,10; 10,89,14 a *rakṣas* is described as creeping etc. AthV. 4,37 they are associated with the *gandharvas* and *apsarasas*, about the personal character of whom there can be no doubt. Cf. also RV. 10,87,14; AthV. 1,35,2 where *rakṣāṃsi* and *piśācāḥ* are put on a par, etc.<sup>18</sup> As Rodhe correctly observes the plural *rakṣāṃsi* has 'a collective sense', in which 'personal and impersonal senses' are not distinguished.<sup>19</sup> It is, indeed, impossible to say whether, RV. 1,79,12, to mention only this place, *agnī rakṣāṃsi sedhati* means, in our terminology "A. (the fire) scares away the demons" or "... drives off the evil, the harmful potencies". But this does not alter the fact that a term such as *tejas* is, Chānd. Up. 6,2,3, used to denote a thinking being: *tat tejo 'srjata. tat teja aikṣata: bahu syām, prajāyeyeti* "It (the only Being) emitted *tejas*. That *tejas* thought: I would that I were many; let me procreate myself". In AthV. 6,41 worship is paid with oblation to *manas* "mind", *cetas* "thought", *cakṣas* "visual faculty" and other powers: as Von Glasenapp<sup>20</sup> rightly remarks, these faculties "werden deshalb mitunter geradezu als Götter verehrt". The alternative use of masculine and neuter pronouns in connection with terms like *brahman*, God etc. by Indian authors and speakers is, moreover, well known.

An interesting term is also *dāman-*. As the suffix *-man-* forms "abstracts and also names of objects and processes originating in abstracts",<sup>21</sup> *dāman-* means "liberality", or "gift". This meaning occurs actually: see e.g. RV. 5,52,14. But 6,44,2 Indra is called a "*dāman* of possessions" which of course means "a giver of p."; cf. 8,23,2: Agni as *dāman-*. The rather general term for "evil", *pāpman*, shows the same double aspect: cf. AV. 5,14,6 "if ... a man ... has perpetrated sorcery in order to do evil": ... *pāpmāne*, as against 6,26,2 "thou who, O evil (*pāpman*) dost not leave us..." A word of the same formation, *takman-* "fever" is AV. 5,22,12 addressed as follows: "O fever, go to that foreign people together with your brother the *balāsa-*,<sup>22</sup> your sister the cough, your cousin the *pāman-* (a skin-disease)...", and 6,20,2 homage is paid to Rudra, Fever and king Varuṇa, to sky, earth and herbs in order to recover from bilious fever.<sup>23</sup> In short, Fever is also a god whose birth-place is

<sup>18</sup> See also Bloomfield, *Atharva-veda*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> S. Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil* (Lund, 1946), p. 47, f. n. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Von Glasenapp, *Entwicklungsstufen des indischen Denkens*, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Wackernagel-Debrunner, *o.c.*, II, 2, p. 754.

<sup>22</sup> A name of several diseases characterized by swellings: see J. Filliozat, *La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne* (Paris, 1949), p. 97 f.; cf. also p. 96 n.

<sup>23</sup> For *takman-* see Filliozat, *o.c.*, p. 96 f. (with references).

mentioned in 1,25,1. "Le dieu Takman... n'est pas moins réel ni moins adorable que les plus grands..., Agni ou Rudra".<sup>24</sup> This personal character of these 'powers' also helps to explain the masculine gender and the accent of these words: and the term "personal character" should in my opinion be preferred to "personification"<sup>25</sup> which suggests a chronological relation between the impersonal and personal view of these concepts which can hardly be substantiated by textual evidence.

Passing mention may finally be made of a number of 'agents' whose name and activity form a paronomastic construction: RV. 4,7,1 *ayam iha prathamō dhāyī dhātṛbhiḥ* "this one here has as the first been established by the establishers", which is unequivocal, the "establishers" being those who institute a sacrifice; 1,95,9 *adabḍhebhīḥ pāyubhīḥ pāhy asmān* "protect us, (O Agni) with (thy) protectors (or "protecting powers") which are not to be deceived (unimpaired)"; 1,53,10 *tvam āvitha suśrava-saṃ tavotibhis | tava trāmabhir indra tūrvayāṇam* "thou hast assisted S. with thine assistants (or 'impersonal?': "assistance, aid"), T. with thy protection(s), O I." It is therefore an interesting question whether a passage such as RV. 8,84,9 *kṣeti kṣemebhīḥ sādhubhīḥ* was completely equivalent to Geldner's German translation "der wohnt in guter Ruhe".<sup>26</sup>

## VI

Some examples, which could be multiplied, will suffice to show that the emotional reactions varying from simple fear and avoidance to awe and reverence which revealed to man the existence of potencies mysterious in nature, marvellous in operation and effective to good and to evil, led him in various countries to the conviction that a force, potency or being resides in, is associated with, rules or controls the manifestations of the element fire. "Eine besondere Stelle nimmt der Feuergott in dem... Religionssystem von Mexiko ein, wo er dem Charakter nach mit dem

<sup>24</sup> V. Henry, *La magie dans l'Inde antique* (Paris, 1904), p. 183.

<sup>25</sup> T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit language* (London, 1955), p. 134. "The general tendency of the neuter to decline, and with it the decline of the old antithesis marked by accent and gender between action noun and agent noun made it easy for a type of masculine (and feminine) action noun to develop. To a certain extent also personification is responsible for the gender." As is well known the accentual difference which existed at the early period of the Vedic or Sanskrit language was lost in the course of time, particulars remaining obscure.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinienues*, I (Paris, 1955), p. 58, n. 1. For paronomasia see the relative chapter of a book on stylistic repetition in the Veda by the present author, which is in preparation.



Sonnengott nahe verwandt ist. . . Sein Name war Xiuhteuctli, der Herr des Feuers."<sup>1</sup> The Chinooks and related peoples believe in a "spirit of the fire", residing in the element and powerful for good and evil.<sup>2</sup> In ancient Ireland it was supposed that the "spirits of fire" dwelt in the wood and stones used in making fire, and when the priests invoked them to appear these spirits brought good luck.<sup>3</sup>

It would be greatly helpful to consider what light the significance of fire in general may throw on the phrase under discussion. The discovery of fire, and especially its use and production,<sup>4</sup> have justly been called the corner-stone of human culture. Pre-scientific man was keenly alive to the importance of this element for good or evil, to its demoniac power and almost indomitable destructiveness (Agni is Mrtyu "Death" Jaim.Br. 1,12; 332), a feature which has, for instance, obtained considerable prominence in the Japanese Fire god.<sup>5</sup> The relation of fire to power, be it destructive (lightning, conflagration) or useful, striking in its effect, must have attracted man's attention at a very early period. Fire was widely considered to be of divine or celestial origin. The flames of fire are indeed a mighty power; spreading warmth and light they enable man to cook his food, to transform virgin forest into fertile soil, to convey his sacrifices to the gods and the deceased to the world beyond. Their living power annihilates cold and darkness, scares away demons and animals,<sup>6</sup> and is readily believed to protect man against any evil originating with seen and unseen beings, including illness (cf. e.g. RV. 1,12,7);<sup>7</sup> Agni is a powerful benefactor of his worshippers, conferring on them health, welfare, offspring, prosperity. "Agni drives away demoniac beings, he the brightly flaming, immortal, light, purifying, worthy of

<sup>1</sup> I refer to Von Schroeder, *o.c.*, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Von Schroeder, *o.c.*, p. 469.

<sup>3</sup> See W. Crooke, *An introduction to the popular religion and folklore of Northern India* (Allahabad, 1894), p. 312.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. F. Boas, *General anthropology* (New York, 1938), p. 239 ff.; K. Birket-Smith, *Geschichte der Kultur* (Zürich, 1946), p. 78 ff.; R. Thurnwald, *Des Menschen-geistes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren* (Berlin, 1951), p. 208 ff.; cf. also J. A. Pauschmann, *Das Feuer und die Menschheit*, I (Thesis Erlangen, 1908), who does not contribute to our subject; M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'Eternel Retour* (Paris, 1949), p. 107 f.; the same, *Forgerons et alchimistes* (Paris, 1956), *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> See also K. Florenz, *Die historischen Quellen der Shinto-Religion* (Göttingen-Leipzig, 1919), p. 18, n. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also P. W. Joyce, *A social history of ancient Ireland* (London-Dublin, 1920), p. 290 ff.; J. Hoops, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, II (Strasburg 1913 ff.), p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), p. 48; 133 etc.; E. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926), II, p. 581; G. Landtman and A. C. Haddon, *The Kiwan Papuans* (London, 1927), p. 36; 223; 310.

reverence" (Taitt. Br. 2,4,1,6). Together with Indra the god of fire smites the rakṣas and gains the universal victory (Śat.Br. 5,2,4,12); he is the light that kills the fiends (Śat.Br. 7,4,1,34). The "scorching fire and warlike son of Heaven" was also in ancient Mesopotamia invoked to destroy opponents and enemies.<sup>8</sup> Fire, especially when considered holy has purifying power; together with water it is the great means of purification, absorbing all evil influences:<sup>9</sup> "Agni is the repeller of all evil" (Śat.Br. 7,3,2,16 *agnir u sarveṣāṃ pāpmanām apahantā*; Mbh. 1,7,24; 2,31,46 *pāpahan-*). As such fire is a mighty friend and protector of man, "a friend in his house", and these connections between man and fire give human life a centre of great social and religious importance.<sup>10</sup> Superfluous to add that this purification is not only of an irrational, but often also of a rational character. The hearth is, especially in the regions inhabited by Indo-European peoples, but elsewhere also, the power centre of the house.<sup>11</sup>

Possessing what the Indians would call *sahas*, *ojas* and *tejas* fire is widely used in ceremonies aiming at favourable results. With the Maori fire was generated in some rites to add greater *mana* and so increase the prospects of success.<sup>12</sup> The ancient Germans had their 'Notfeuer', the salutary fire kindled *inter alia* for curative purposes: if not generated by rubbing wood it was useless, lacking power and effectiveness.<sup>13</sup> In the district of Halberstadt "müssen die stricke der holzwalze von zwei keuschen knaben gezogen werden".<sup>14</sup> On the Island of Mull (Scotland) an 'incantation' was performed in the year 1767: by means of a wheel and nine spindles of oakwood a fire was produced, before noon (in order to be effective), formulas were recited all the time the fire was being raised; it was not allowed to repeat them afterwards.<sup>15</sup>

In German antiquity and folklore fire, esp. the fire of the hearth was often considered an animate being: "Es spricht nicht nur, sondern schilt, schimpft, hadert, keift, brummt, weint, wird also als lebendes Wesen

<sup>8</sup> Th. Jacobsen, in H. Frankfort, *Before Philosophy* (Harmondsworth, 1949), p. 147.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. A. Bertholet-E. Lehmann, *Chantepie de la Saussaye's Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen, 1925), I, p. 38 f. and passim; van der Leeuw, *o.c.*, p. 60 ff.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. also H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda* (1923), p. 130 ff.; L. M. R. Simons, *Flamma Aeterna* (Thesis Utrecht, 1949), p. 94; Schmidt, *o.c.*, 10, p. 70 f.; 301.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. e.g. also O. Schrader-A. Nehrung, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, I (Berlin-Leipzig, 1917-1923), p. 495 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Te Rangi Hiroa, *The coming of the Maori* (Wellington, 1950), p. 501.

<sup>13</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*<sup>4</sup> (Berlin, 1875), p. 502 ff., where many details are given.

<sup>14</sup> Grimm, *o.c.*, p. 504.

<sup>15</sup> Grimm, *o.c.*, p. 506.



gedacht, das erzürnt ist. Je nach der ihm gewährten Behandlung richtet es sein Verhalten zum Menschen ein. Man stellt sich daher gut mit ihm, indem man es zu bestimmten Zeiten und bei besonderen Gelegenheiten füttert... Vor allem aber hütet man sich, es durch Wort oder Tat zu beleidigen. Ein verfluchtes Feuer gebärdet sich wie ein gereiztes Tier und wird zur Feuersbrunst, die nicht zu löschen ist... Die brennende Flamme verscheucht nicht nur, sie vernichtet... In dieser Beziehung wird dem Feuer bis in die Gegenwart hinein sowohl eine apotropäische, als auch eine therapeutische Kraft zugeschrieben... Hier wird auch besonders deutlich, dass diese Kraft dem Feuer um so mehr beigemessen wurde, je reiner, d.h. je unmittelbarer es gewonnen war. Durch den profanen Gebrauch wurde das Feuer verunreinigt und verlor seine übernatürlichen Fähigkeiten."<sup>16</sup> "Bei den südafrik. Bergdama steht das (heilige) Feuer in innigem Zusammenhang mit dem ganzen Leben der Leute. Man nährt und kräftigt das Feuer zum Dank... oder macht es verantwortlich, wenn Jagd oder Sammeln erfolglos ausgefallen ist. Den Bergdama gilt das heilige Feuer als beseeltes Wesen, das... die Macht zur segnenden und strafenden Tat besitzt. Der Quirlstock für die Feuerbereitung wird bei den Herero vom Vater auf den Sohn Generationen hindurch vererbt und wie ein leibhafter Ahne verehrt. An dem Besitz dieses Werkzeugs hängt die Hauptlings- und Priesterwürde."<sup>17</sup>

The Indian sacrificial fire was also 'fed' with bits of consecrated wood (*samidh-*) from the palāśa tree; Agni is often described as eating or devouring. The smouldering embers of the sacred fire were, in India, not allowed to be extinguished. If this occurred the whole household fell into confusion, everything going wrong until an expiation had been performed and the fire was re-kindled. In Rome, the extinction of the fire in the temple of Vesta was, in a similar way, considered a national calamity. Some ceremonies among various peoples may have been reminiscences of a time when the chief's life and the general safety were supposed to depend on the maintenance of the fire: if the fire were put out the chief would die.<sup>18</sup> Some other evidence of the 'holiness' of fire may find a place here: "A Badaga, who failed in an attempt to demonstrate the making of fire ... gave as an excuse that he was under wordly pollution, from which he would be free at the time of the fire-walking

<sup>16</sup> H. Freudenthal, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, II (Berlin-Leipzig, 1929-30), 1389 ff., esp. 1398 f.; 1401.

<sup>17</sup> R. Thurnwald, in M. Ebert, *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, I (Berlin, 1925), p. 275 ff.

<sup>18</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II (London, 1911), p. 265.

ceremony."<sup>19</sup> Though the Badagas make fire by friction, reference is made in their folk legends, not to this method of obtaining fire, but to flint and steel, which is also repeatedly referred to in connection with cremation. It has been surmised that flint and steel was the older method, which has, in the solemnity of funeral rites, been preserved by reason of its association, because steel and iron are believed to have "a repulsive power over the spirits that hover about the dead".<sup>20</sup> In any case, iron is a powerful material. Although the Todas obtain, for domestic purposes, fire from matches, the use of this modern contrivance was however in Thurston's day forbidden within the precincts of the dairy temple. The ritual mode of obtaining fire by friction is looked upon as something secret and sacred. A fire-stick was regarded as polluted and rendered useless by the touch of an unqualified person.<sup>21</sup> Among the Bantu tribes of south-eastern Africa fire is produced by two sticks made of a special tree, and called the 'husband and wife'. These sticks which are prepared by the magicians are given by a 'doctor' to the chief, becoming his exclusive property.<sup>22</sup> The chief, or divine representative of the community obviously is the only one to whom these powerful implements can be entrusted. Another interesting custom is reported from the Balkans: when an epidemic is raging a girl and a boy are led into a dark room, where they must strip themselves of all their clothes without speaking a word.<sup>23</sup> Then they are to rub two dry pieces of lime-wood till they take fire. The fire obtained in this way is "living fire", used for the purpose of healing.<sup>24</sup> In illustration of the belief fostered by uneducated people in an almost personal powerfulness of the element under discussion mention may be made of the following event: when a village of the Sema Nagas, who inhabit the hills between Assam and Burma, was repeatedly burnt down, people did not consider themselves to be secure against conflagration before an old man was killed by the fire: it was at once said that now that a victim had been obtained the village would not be burnt for a long time.<sup>25</sup>

Although strictly speaking foreign to our subject the view of fire as a manifestation of a higher principle or genius may be recalled here. Fire

<sup>19</sup> The Badagas are a tribe in Southern India. See E. Thurston, *Castes and tribes in Southern India*, I (Madras, 1909), p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> J. C. Hodson, *The primitive culture of India* (London, 1922), p. 36 f.

<sup>21</sup> Thurston, *o.c.*, VII, p. 127 ff.

<sup>22</sup> J. Macdonald, *Light in Africa*<sup>3</sup> (London, 1890), p. 216 f.

<sup>23</sup> Silence and nakedness add to the efficacy of the rite.

<sup>24</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II (London, 1911), p. 237.

<sup>25</sup> J. E. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 43.



was often considered an embodiment of the life or fertility spirit which was kindled by making fire. Hence also the conception of the procreative principle as active in fire.<sup>26</sup> If the flame of valour arose in a Celtic hero his body became unrecognizable as if animated by a different spirit; his normal consciousness was no longer in control.<sup>27</sup>

A similar tendency to connect a power or phenomenon in nature with a 'person' may be seen in the widespread belief in a 'mother' of the hearth, or the *Ugguns mātē* "fire mother" of the Lettish.<sup>28</sup> The Bhils in Central India adore a mother of the fire pit who is especially worshipped when a member of the community is seriously ill, or when women are barren.<sup>29</sup>

In ancient Mesopotamia the god of fire appearing in the double form of Girru and Nusku was a son of Anu (God), the "first-born of heaven", the "image of his father". Among the gods he occupies a high position: "er ist in Glanz gekleidet, sein Licht ist unauslöschlich". He has many other names "die sämtlich seine Stärke, seine Majestät, seinen Glanz und den Schrecken, den er einzuflößen vermag, hervorheben". He is powerful, conquers the enemies, destroys all evil, including magic.<sup>30</sup> The flames of the fire are believed to have been born in heaven: "Who art thou, who art born in the light place?"<sup>31</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this article to study the 'holiness' or 'sacredness' of fire in general. It is therefore also needless to recall for instance that for ceremonial fire-making modern means such as matches have often been avoided,<sup>32</sup> or to explain at length that according to mystic speculations this element has the power to conduct a corpse to the other worlds.

It seems, in defending the above opinion, reasonable first to recall the fact, well known among anthropologists and students of religions, that smiths and other people using fire for particular purposes are in a variety of countries and cultures regarded as wonder workers or a sort of magicians, dreaded as sorcerers and allies of evil spirits or honoured for a supposed possession of occult power. Smiths often rank, or serve,

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Balder, p. 106 ff.; R. B. Onians, *The origin of European thought* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 156 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Onians, *o.c.*, p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> See Von Schroeder, *o.c.*, p. 580 f.

<sup>29</sup> Koppers, *Die Bhil in Zentralindien* (Wien, 1948), p. 150.

<sup>30</sup> M. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* (Giessen, 1905), p. 296 ff., cf. also p. 486.

<sup>31</sup> Jastrow, *o.c.*, I, p. 317.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. R. E. Enthoven, *The folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 34.

as priests, physicians and magicians.<sup>22</sup> Now, we are well-informed with regard to various rites and practices observed in accomplishing their task<sup>24</sup> and testifying to the belief that irrational actions, special super-human powers, are necessities to the success of technical activities. Among the Ba-ila of Northern Rhodesia the "iron doctor", i.e. the smith, is a most important personage, for without his 'magic' it would be impossible to extract the iron from the ore. Before smelting operations begin he gives each of two children, a boy and a girl, a bean, which they are to crack in their mouths; the noise produced in this way is associated with that of the fire and is supposed to conduce to proper smelting. The 'doctor' spits out upon the ore the drugs which he has chewed, adding a piece of elephant's hide and other objects which are believed to promote the process. The fire is taboo and must not be called "fire" but "the fierce one". Thus a certain amount of 'magic' and the co-operation of 'higher powers' is regarded as absolutely indispensable to the success of important activities, for in spite of all human endeavour and forethought and beyond all human efforts there are forces and agencies which can only be controlled by superhuman potencies.<sup>25</sup>

The belief that Agni was generated in various ways continues to exist in post-Vedic texts. Any source of fire could, in a natural way, be considered Agni's birth-place: "Jedes das Feuer entzündende Holz, jeder Lehrer über Feueranlegung, der die Flamme anfachende Wind, auch das Wasser, weil nach einer cosmogonischen Anschauung dort das Feuer seinen Ursprung hat, sie alle gelten beiläufig als Erzeuger des Agni...".<sup>26</sup> It is worth mentioning that in the epic period Fire was moreover considered to contain or possess the power called *tejas* "fiery or stinging energy", which was conceived as "flaming" or as manifesting as a flaming glow: Mbh. 4,2,15 fire is described as *tejasvinām varah* "(Agni) is the foremost of (all) bright substances (of the s. possessed of brilliant energy)", Lalitav. p. 130, 6 f.l. *śrīyā tejasā ca jājvalyamānam* (the Bodhisattva was) "shining strongly by *śrī*- and *tejas*." Compare also TB. 2,1,2,9 which speaks of "both *tejas*" (*ubhe tejasī*) of sun and fire and 1,3,1,1 of the

<sup>22</sup> This is of course also due to the 'sanctity' of iron, see e.g. A. C. Kruyt, *Het animisme in den Indischen archipel* (The Hague, 1906), p. 160 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Similar observations could be made with regard to other techniques; see, for instance, G. Conteneau, *La magie chez les Assyriens et Babyloniens* (Paris, 1947), p. 111 ff.

<sup>25</sup> See for instance B. Malinowski, *Magic, science and religion* (New York, 1954), p. 25 ff.; G. van der Leeuw, *De religie der primitieve volken*, in G. van der Leeuw-C. J. Bleeker, *De godsdiensten der wereld*<sup>3</sup> (Amsterdam, 1955), p. 402 ff.

<sup>26</sup> Holtzmann, *Agni nach den Vorstellungen des Mahābhārata* (Straszbürg, 1878), p. 18.



*tejasvinī tanūḥ* "the 'brilliant' manifestation" of Agni and Soma. We shall have to revert to this point.

Thus the Indo-Iranian god of fire, which was never disconnected from the element in which he was believed to exist, was worshipped, praised, and feared as a strong and powerful, pure and wise god, a giver of food and glory, of offspring<sup>37</sup> and intellectual power, friendly to the house and its inhabitants, but a destroyer of enemies and evil spirits.<sup>38</sup> Agni is (Śat.Br. 6,6,3,13 ff.) a conqueror, overpowering in battles, devourer of any aggressor, burning up the enemies of the gods.

Hence it is clear why Agni should have been called "both the *brahma* and the *kṣatram*" (Śat.Br. 6,6,3,15 *agnir brahma ca kṣatram ca*) or "'spiritual' and worldly power".

In India and elsewhere this idea of fire was expanded to gigantic proportions, the element becoming a paramount deity, a universally vivifying power, a fundamental principle, supporting mankind and the universe: seated on the back of the earth, Agni fills the air with his shine, props the sky with his light, upholding the quarters by his lustre (cf. Vāj.S. 17,72). His is universal sovereignty (*sāmrājya*-<sup>39</sup> Śat.Br. 9,3,4,17), through him everything exists (Śat.Br. 8,1,1,4); he is equal to all the deities (Pañc.Br. 9,4,5; 18,1,8). Being offspring himself he is the lord of offspring (Śat.Br. 9,1,2,42) and regarded as identical with Prajāpati (Śat.Br. 6,2,2,33), the procreative power of fire being a frequent theme of mythical traditions.<sup>40</sup>

There is no point in pursuing the religious character of fire any further; let it suffice to recapitulate: Agni is a great and mighty power, a conqueror and destroyer, creative and supporting man and universe.<sup>41</sup> "Wenn Gottesfurcht, die Furcht vor einer Macht, die im gegebenen Falle gewaltig, zürnend, strafend, rächend erscheinen, zerstörend Hab und Gut und selbst das Leben des Menschen erfassen, ihn zugrunde richten und vernichten kann, . . . dann war auch aus diesem Grunde das Feuer

<sup>37</sup> Cf. e.g. also W. Koppers, *Die Bhil in Zentralindien* (Wien, 1948), p. 150 ff.

<sup>38</sup> For fire as a protection against evil spirits see e.g. J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), p. 48; 133.

<sup>39</sup> For this idea see "Anc. Ind. Kingship", *Numen*, 4, p. 33. For references about the Ba-ila ceremony see H. Webster, *Magic* (Stanford Cal., 1948), p. 165 f. and 177. The boy and the girl, being innocent or 'cool', are able to assist in generating fire without allowing the flames to be too fierce so as to spoil the whole operation. See e.g. also Thurnwald, *Des Menschengestirns Erwachen*. . . (Berlin, 1951), p. 325 ff.

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertrankes*<sup>2</sup> (Berlin, [1859] 1886), p. 64 ff.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g. L. Renou (et J. Filliozat), *L'Inde classique*, I (Paris, 1947), p. 325 f.; A. Holtzmann, *Agni nach den Vorstellungen des Mahābhārata* (Strasbourg, 1878).

wohl dazu angetan, als etwas Göttliches zu erscheinen. Man fühlte sich in mancher Art abhängig von ihm, fühlte es mächtig wirken, aus einer Sphäre heraus, die dem Menschen nicht zugänglich war".<sup>42</sup>

## VII

The special relation of Agni to the power called *sahas* is also apparent from a considerable number of epithets. In the R̥gveda the god is ten times addressed as *sahasāvan*- "mighty, i.e. possessing *sahas*"; this adjective is given twice to Indra, once to Soma. Cf. RV. I, 189,5 where the god is implored to protect those praying against evil and greedy enemies; 3, 1,22 where he is besought to convey the sacrifice to the gods; 6, 15, 12 where he is expected to protect men against intriguers and disgrace; 7, 1, 24 the mighty one is implored to grant riches to be enjoyed during a full span of life (cf. 7, 43, 5; 8, 47, 4); 5, 20, 4 he must guide man to his grace, to wealth and sacrifice; 7, 4, 6 he is stated to be able to give sons and 'immortality' (*amṛta*-), i.e. continuance of life (cf. 10, 115, 8). The participle *sahasāna*- "mighty" or rather "manifesting one's victorious power" is three times used in connection with the god of fire,<sup>1</sup> once (4, 17, 3) with the victorious Indra after cleaving the mountains: compare especially 7, 7, 1 where the 'mighty' Agni, though being a god, is said to be urged on like a horse which wins *vāja*-.<sup>2</sup> Another adjective, which occurs once (5, 29, 9) in connection with Indra's horses, the god himself being called conquering,<sup>3</sup> is *sahasya*- "mighty etc.": 1, 147, 5; 2, 2, 11; 7, 1, 5; 16, 8; 42, 6; 10, 1, 7 it is used in similar contexts: 10, 87, 22 the poet expresses his intention to surround himself with Agni, the powerful one, as a stronghold.<sup>4</sup> The word *sahasvat*- "powerful, mighty, victorious" is in the R̥gveda likewise mostly used of Agni: 1, 189, 4 "protect us, O Agni, with Thine indefatigable protectors...; fear will not befall Thy singer"; 3, 14, 4 the wish is formulated that Agni, the *sahasvat*- and *sahasas putra*-, will extend himself over the countries; 5, 9, 7 the god is requested to grant

<sup>42</sup> L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 468. On p. 466-598 of this book an exposition is given of the significance and worship of fire in ancient India, Iran, Greece, Rome, Germany etc. Cf. e.g. also F. Cornelius, *Indogerm. Religionsgeschichte* (München, 1942), p. 69.

<sup>1</sup> Some incidental references to special meanings may be passed over in silence.

<sup>2</sup> See *Aspects of early Vīṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), esp. p. 48 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also 7, 55, 7.

<sup>4</sup> This stanza is AV. 7, 71, 1 which in the Vaitānasātra (28, 8) occurs in the agnicayana in a description of a threefold circling with fire.



wealth and prosperity, to strengthen those praying in combats, and to assist them in winning the ardently desired *vāja*-; 5,23,2 the poet implores him to bring that wealth which leads to victory in battle (*prtanāsaḥaṃ rayim*), stating that he is the true marvellous giver of *vāja*- consisting of cattle; 7,4,4 the god is besought not to lead his followers astray, i.e. to guide them well; 6,5,6 to drive the rivals away "with victorious power" (*sahasā*); 5,7,1 the *ūrjo naptar*- "son (offspring) of vigour" is called the "highest among the nations" (*varṣiṣṭhāya kṣitīnām*); 1,97,5 the wish is expressed that he will, by his flames, drive off evil. Cf. also 1,127,10; 3,14,2; 8,43,33; 102,7. The passages in which this adjective is added to other names or nouns deserve our attention: 2,13,11 "the manly vigour of the victorious (mighty) god (i.e. Indra) who is steadfast by nature"; 6,22,1 "Indra, the lord, the bull possessed of manly power, the true warrior, the victorious one"; 10,103,5 with two other derivatives of *sah*- in a long enumeration of Indra's heroic epithets: pre-eminent hero, powerful, victorious, etc.; 10,145,2 = AV. 3,18,2 a "god-quickenened" herb which is requested to thrust away a rival, is also called *sahasvatī* "victorious, potent". RV. 10,115,6 Agni-Jātavedas is addressed *vājinta-māya sahyase* "Thee, who art more than others characterized by possessing *vāja*-".

Curiously enough the other Rgvedic adjectives deriving from the same root serve in most cases to characterize Indra, Manyu, etc.; generally speaking, they express the same nuance: cf. e.g. 10,83,4; 9,90,3 where Soma is called "ein überlegener Sieger" (Geldner: *sahāvān jetā*). The adjective *sahāvān* characterizes Indra as "victorious or winning in battles like an energetic (untired) horse": 3,49,3; cf. 6,18,2; Savitar as a disposer of goods: 7,45,3; the illustrious steed Tārṣya, the 'patron saint' of those who race horses: 10,178,1; however, 6,14,5 it is used in connection with Agni who protects against contempt and whose possessions are not kept back. The same god is 10,176,4 described as *sahasā cid sahiyān* "gewaltiger als selbst der Gewaltige" (Geldner), i.e. "powerful and victorious par excellence";<sup>6</sup> he is, the poet adds, "created in order to live" (*jīvātave kṛtāḥ*). RV. 8,39,5 Agni's activity is called *sahiyas*- and *citra*- "überlegen, ausgezeichnet" (Geldner): he is the sacrificial priest and has control over the acceptance of the offerings (by the gods). Elsewhere this word is generally used of victorious, powerful, 'überlegen' persons: a king (1,71,4), powerful men (1,171,6) etc. The adjective *sahuri*-<sup>6</sup> translated by "sieg-

<sup>6</sup> This is a well-known method of 'Ausdrucksverstärkung'.

<sup>7</sup> For the form see J. Wackernagel-A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2 (Göttingen, 1954), p. 488: it is almost identical with the Gr. *εὐσπής* "strong, secure"

reich, sieggewohnt" (Grassmann) helps to describe Indra, the warlike and victorious hero who subdues men (*janamsaha-*) (2,21,3; 4,22,9; cf. 8,46,20; 10,92,8); Manyu, the all-nourishing or all-sustaining one, the protector, commander-in-chief, destroyer of enemies, who gives strength and valour in combats (10,83,6; 10,84,2; 5).

There can therefore be no doubt that the ideas conveyed, in these derivatives, by *sahas* was that of a superhuman power and potency, conditioning, or manifesting in, victoriousness, domination, power over others, 'Überlegenheit'; it obviously did not refer to physical force applied in domestic life, in everyday occurrences, in preparing food or sacrifices etc.

Of special interest are, on account of their meaning, the compounds *sahojā-* (RV.) and *sāhaskṛta-*. The former is 10,103,5 found in an Indra hymn, 1,85,1 in a text addressed to Agni: "never the immortal one who is born from *sahas* is urged on... (i.e. he needs no one to animate him)". Leaving the above problem out of consideration there seems to be no point in translating the latter place by "durch Gewalt erzeugt" (the former being rendered by "kraftgeboren": Grassmann and Petr. Dict.). The word *sahaskṛta-* may, in a similar way, be taken to be a reflection of the idea that a god who represents a power, is "made" that power: 8,99,8 "we invoke Indra, who heals without needing any healing himself,<sup>7</sup> who is produced as *sahas*, the possessor of wealth who raises wealth (*iṣkartāram aniṣkṛtaṃ sahaskṛtaṃ... vasavānaṃ vasūjvanti*) in order to lend us assistance" – cf. also st. 7 "the impeller who needs no one to impel himself" (*praheṭāram aprahitaṃ*) –: would it be too bold a supposition that the words following *sahaskṛtaṃ*, viz. "of hundredfold assistance, of hundredfold (mental) power" (*śatamūṭiṃ śatakratum*) are a sort of complement to it, specifying some manifestations of the god's *sahas*-like essence?<sup>8</sup> Another text gives rise to similar considerations: 10,83,1 dedicated to Manyu who, however, in the following stanza is identified with Indra, contains the wish to conquer, together with this god ("Kampfzorn" Geldner), who is made *sahas*, with *sahas*-possessing *sahas*, the enemies (*sāhyāma... sahaskṛtena sahasā sahasvatā*): what is

(of a harbour, persons), *ἔχρηός* "firm, lasting, stout" (wood, persons, places, strongholds, military positions etc.).

<sup>7</sup> But see also Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 427.

<sup>8</sup> For the grammatical form and the sense of the expression compare, in later texts, *guruṣṛta-* "highly praised, worshipped" (lit. "made an authority"); *prādhvaṃkṛ-* "to put aside" (*prādhva-* "distant"); cf. also *sat-kṛ-* "to make (something, someone) *sat*", i.e. to put right, set in order etc."



made, or produced as, *sahas*<sup>9</sup> possesses *sahas*, is *sahas*. RV. 8,3,4 Indra – who in st. 3 was said to have grown by the praise of the poet – is described as being *sahas-kṛta* – by a thousand *ṛṣis*. In the above places the compound has been translated according to Pāṇini 2,1,59, the former member being taken as a predicate.<sup>10</sup> It would be possible to regard it as representing an ablative: produced from *sahas*.<sup>11</sup> But is it necessary to follow the Indian tradition<sup>12</sup> in interpreting the same compound when used of Agni as “produced by strength” (Grassmann, etc.)? Would it not be preferable to translate with Roth<sup>13</sup> all occurrences in the same way? There is in the relevant texts hardly any indication of Agni’s being produced by (human) strength: 8,44,11 “protect us, O Agni, burn the injurers, destroy the enmity, O *sahas-kṛta*”; 43,16; 28; 6,16,37; 1,45,9, the stanza 5,8,1 being a possible exception. The passage 3,27,9 f. seems to reflect the conception of Agni’s fatherhood and childhood:<sup>14</sup> “he received the germ of existences (beings), child<sup>15</sup> of Dakṣa (he received his) father” (*bhūtānām garbham ā dadhe/ dakṣasya pitarām tanā*)...; the words *dakṣasyeḷā sahas-kṛta* in stanza 10, which were translated by Geldner: “du von der Id mit Kraft erzeugter (Sohn) des Dakṣa”, may, if I am not mistaken, rather mean: “Dakṣa’s child, made by (through) Id<sup>16</sup> (a manifestation of) *sahas*”. Dakṣa, the father of the gods, the primeval father of the world (cf. RV. 8,25,5), “the dexterous” or “clever” One, seems to be a representation of the idea of intelligent power conditioning the existence of the divinities (cf. 6,50,2 where the Ādityas are spoken of as “gods who have Dakṣa as their father”, and Śat.Br. 2,4,4,2 where Dakṣa is identified with the lord of creation, Prajāpati).<sup>17</sup> Attention may also be drawn to Ath.V. 6,39,1, the first stanza of a small text used – cf. KauśikaS. 13,3 ff. – in a rite for gaining glory (*yaśas*): “as glory let (my) oblation increase, quickened by Indra, of thousand-fold might, well-protected, made *sahas* (victorious, powerful)... make me increase unto chiefhood”.

There is no point in pursuing here the sense of other related words.

<sup>9</sup> “i.e. *sahasā balena yuktaḥ kṛtaḥ Sāyaṇa*.”

<sup>10</sup> See also Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.*, II, 1 (Göttingen, 1905), p. 199.

<sup>11</sup> Monier Williams, *Dict.*, explains: “invigorated, increased, excited”.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Sāyaṇa: *sahas-kṛta: mathanākhyena balena niṣpanna*.

<sup>13</sup> R. Roth, *Petr. Dict.*, VII, 868, Geldner rendered the compound by “Kraft-erzeugter” (RV. 5,8,1; 6,16,37 etc.).

<sup>14</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 361.

<sup>15</sup> This word is, in the original Sanskrit, fem. generis.

<sup>16</sup> It represents the sacrificial gift, the food presented to the gods; the libations poured out into the sacrificial fire, add to its power.

<sup>17</sup> I refer to A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Straszbürg, 1897), p. 46; A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II (Breslau, 1929), p. 86.

Let it suffice to recall that the verb *sah-* expresses such ideas as "to prevail, to be victorious; to conquer, overcome, to master, suppress, withstand, resist, to bear up against, etc."

In studying the victorious and overwhelming character of the god of fire one might adduce a number of similar beliefs and expressions, used in a variety of communities in connection with the sun, a divinity nearly related to, or identical with, fire. The sun is victorious, "invictus", in ancient Egypt<sup>18</sup> and in Rome, in Babylon and with the Jews ("the son rejoices as a strong man to run a race"<sup>19</sup>) and in ancient Greece (cf. e.g. Soph. Ant. 100 ff.); everywhere light, life and salvation are associated. "Light, the sun... is a conquering hero, a warrior who annihilates the monster of darkness."<sup>20</sup>

The tendency to denote deities by names of the type *sahasah sūnuh* is especially evident in Agni's case. In RV. 6,49,2 this phrase combines with "child of heaven (of the sky)" (*divah śiśu-*); he is indeed stated to have been born in the highest heavens (1,143,2; 6,8,2), but he is also identified with the light of heaven, the sun being a form of him: cf. 10,88,6; 3,2,14; 5,37,1; 8,44,29 etc.; his splendour in the heavens is, according to Śat.Br. 7,1,1,23, the sun.

Agni is on the one hand offspring of *ūrj-* "vigour, strength, refreshment": RV. 1,58,8 combining with *sūnu-* *sahasah* in a prayer for protection against *aṃhas* "distress, anxiety"; cf. also 2,6,2; 5,17,5 "protect us in order to promote our cause" (*abhiṣṭaye*); 6,16,25 "to see the immortal Agni, the child of vigour (refreshment) is a gratifying sight to a mortal man who is hungry"; 8,71,3 and 9 he is implored to give wealth; 10,20,10 he is stated to have given food and a place to dwell in; 10,140,3 "in Thee they have placed together various refreshments (draughts, *iṣah*)", cf. 8,84,4 and 10,115,8. Here also the tendency is clear to use a special epithet of the god in stanzas imploring him to give evidence of those special activities which are denoted by the epithet, or praising or describing these aspects of his character. The same god is on the other hand called a "lord of refreshments": *ūrjām pati-*: RV. 1,26,1 where he is besought to worship (the gods on behalf of those praying); 8,19,7 in wishing good sacrificial fires; 23,12 in praying for wealth and assistance in combats; 60,9 in a prayer for protection. Whilst referring with regard to the epithet with *pati-* to some observations made in another publica-

<sup>18</sup> See also Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> H. Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete*, II (1911), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Van der Leeuw, *Religion*, p. 66. See also A. Audin, *Les fêtes solaires* (Paris, 1945).



tion<sup>21</sup> it may be recalled *κτῶναι* οἱ that this type of name is not only of frequent occurrence in the Vedic literature, but also in other ancient Indo-European documents and, in addition to these, among non-Indo-European peoples. The idea underlying these names is, irrespective of the vagueness of the conception of the divine powers, no doubt the conviction that every superhuman potency or phenomenon has two aspects, which can for the sake of simplicity be called 'personal' and 'impersonal', or – to express it otherwise – the belief that there must be sentient and rational beings 'possessing', supervising and representing the mighty and often dangerous powers which make their presence felt in the universe, beings which, if need be, can dispose of these powers. From various passages it is indeed evident that a lord of something was regarded as a distributor of it: cf. e.g. RV. 4,24,1 the hero (i.e. Indra) is in the habit of giving possessions to the eulogist, he is the lord of the donations. Nay, Indra is a stream of wealth: 1,4,10 *yo rāyo 'vanir mahān*. 1,30,5 he is again a "lord of bounty", *rādhasas pati-*; Agni who RV. 1,68,7 is called a lord of riches (cf. 72,1 *rayipatī rayiṇām*) is 73,4 implored to remain a bearer of wealth and 79,8 to bring goods to those praying; cf. 1,70,5. This association of lordship and liberality is in harmony with the Indian view that any ruler and possessor should share out those valuable objects of which he has the disposal to those who own allegiance to him.<sup>22</sup> The endless repetition of these qualifications of the gods is not only a poetical device; it serves to strengthen and stimulate the god's powers and faculties and his readiness to give evidence of them.

Similar remarks may be made on the phrases "lord of *śavas*" and "son of *śavas*". Indra is called a lord of "heroism, prowess, superiority": 1,11,2 in a stanza praising him as an invincible victorious god; 131,4 in a description of his heroic exploits and punitive proceedings; 5,35,5 in destroying enemies; 8,45,20 "we lean on Thee like old men on a staff"; 8,90,5 "Thou defeatedst the enemies"; 10,22,3 "Indra the lord of great heroism, the promotor of great courage". Cf. also 3,41,5; 8,6,21; 97,6. In other passages the same god is addressed as "son of *śavas*": 4,24,1 where he is described as liberal; 8,90,2 as great and liberal; 92,14 "there is nothing to surpass Thee". The former epithet is also given to Agni: 5,6,9 "feed us"; 1,145,1. RV. 1,161,14 on the other hand calls the Ṛbhus who are generally associated with Indra, "offspring of *śavas*": *śavaso napātāḥ*. It may be observed that Indra, the lord of heroism, is briefly addressed as "hero": 1,11,6; 29,4; 32,12; 2,11,18 ("put on Thy

<sup>21</sup> See the author's *Notes on brahman* (Utrecht, 1950), p. 67 f.

<sup>22</sup> See also *Numen*, 3, p. 48 f.

heroism, O hero": *dhiṣvā śavaḥ sūra*). With the exception of two cases, in which *sūra* characterizes Agni, all vocatives of this adjective, which is etymologically related to *śavas*, enumerated in Grassmann's *Wörterbuch* refer to Indra. The conclusion seems therefore to be warranted that those gods which are considered lords or sons of heroism are heroes par excellence. Now it is a curious fact that Indra, "the son of *śavas*" is twice stated to be the son of a mother called *Śavasī*: RV. 8,45,5 and 77,(66),2. That this female being really was believed to be his mother<sup>23</sup> appears from 8,45,4 and 77,(66),1 where the term *mātaram* is used; in 8,77,2 *Śavasī* addresses Indra by the vocative *putra*. The only admissible conclusion seems to be that the 'personal' view of the god's origin could, in ancient Vedic times, alternate with an 'impersonal'.

Thus Indra who is frequently styled "well-known, renowned" (cf. 1,53,9; 2,21,6 etc.) is RV. 1,103,4 given the name of "son of Renown" (*sūnuḥ śravase*). Passing mention may also be made of the phrase *dhiyas pati-* "lord of thought" which is RV. 1,23,3 given to gods whose aid is invoked by the inspired poets, 9,75,2 and 9,99,6 to the eloquent Soma, the god who inspires the poet. The same god is for similar reasons addressed as *manasas pati-* "lord of mind (spirit, imagination, invention)": 9,11,8.

Among the other expressions the combinations with *satya-* "truth" or "reality" are also worth mentioning. In RV. 7,35, which is a long prayer for happiness, the lords of *satya-* are among the many powers invoked; obviously the gods are meant,<sup>24</sup> but 8,69,4 Indra is called lord of cows, son of *satya-* (*sūnuḥ satyasya*) and *satpati-*. This compound, which often characterizes Indra, has been translated in various ways: "starker Gebieter oder Beschützer, kräftig gebietend" (Grassmann); "Heerführer, Anführer überh.; Vorkämpfer, Held" (Petr. Dict.); "a mighty lord, leader, champion" (Monier Williams); "lord of the good" (Whitney-Lanman<sup>25</sup>); "true (?) lord" Macdonell;<sup>26</sup> "wirklicher Gebieter" or "rechtmässiger Gebieter" (Geldner);<sup>27</sup> "maitre de la maison" (*sat-* < *sadas*, Renou<sup>28</sup>). Sometimes the meaning "who is lord of what is real, true, proper, honest" might be probable, sometimes, however, "true, real, honest, virtuous, good, lord" (cf. e.g. RV. 1,11,6) must be preferred.

A frequent phrase is *ūrjo napāt* which occurs RV. 1,58,8; 2,6,2 and elsewhere as a form of address. As the word *napāt*, though related to the

<sup>23</sup> Sāyaṇa explains *śavasī* by *balavati mātā* (on 8,45,5).

<sup>24</sup> Sāyaṇa explains: *pālakāḥ satyaśilā devāḥ*.

<sup>25</sup> Whitney-Lanman, *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā*, p. 430 (AV. 7,62,1).

<sup>26</sup> Macdonell, *A Vedic reader*, p. 251.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Geldner, *Der Rgveda übersetzt*, I, p. 70 (1,54,7; 91,5).

<sup>28</sup> Renou, *Grammaire de la langue védique*, p. 25.



Latin *nepos* "grandson", the German (O.H.G.) *nevo* "nephew" etc., conveys the more general sense of "offspring, descendant" and in phrases such as the one under discussion of "son", Agni, who is meant here, is qualified as a "son of strength (vigour, refreshment)": in 1,58,8 the god is asked to protect against distress; similarly 5,17,5 "O son of strength (*ū. n.*) protect us, do Thou exert Thyself for our well-being, be the one who fortifies us in battles". RV. 6,16,25 it is called a good thing for a mortal man who wishes to eat, to see Agni, the son of strength: here the god is the cooker of food. RV. 8,71,3, cf. st. 9 where Agni is implored to give wealth. Cf. also 10,20,10. RV. 10,105,8 *ūrjo napāt* is followed by the vocative *sahasāvan*; cf. also 8,19,7. Beside this expression the word *ūrj-* (in the plural) occurs in the phrase *ūrjām pati-*, likewise applying to Agni: RV. 1,26,1 *ūrjām pate*; 8,23,12 Agni, the lord of strength (pl.) is implored to grant wealth and to assist man in war; 8,60,9 he is besought to protect the persons praying.<sup>29</sup> There can be no doubt that both expressions, "son of strength" and "lord of strength", are practically speaking synonymous, or rather: they denote two aspects of the same conception: he who disposes of strength, may be considered a manifestation of it. And he who wins *ūrj-* is expected to put it at the disposal of others: RV. 6,4,4 (Agni is addressed) *sa tvaṃ na ūrjasana ūrjaṃ dhāh*.

Some observations may be added here on similar phrases. Having dealt, on one of the preceding pages, with *śavasah sīnu-* we now come to *śavaso napāt*, which in the plural is a form of addressing the Ṛbhus, who are very skilful gods, associated with Agni, Indra, Savitar and other deities.<sup>30</sup> In RV. 4,37,4 they are invoked as "children of heroism" and as "son of Indra".<sup>31</sup> Cf. also RV. 1,161,14; 4,34,6; 35,1; 8. Being Indra-like, they have a share in the soma draught. With Indra they help mortals to victory and are invoked to destroy their enemies, to give wealth and prosperity. The epithet may therefore be understood in the above way: representatives of the power called *śavas*. Otherwise the same expression is only once applied to Mitra-Varuṇa, who 8,25,5 are described as follows: "the offspring of great *śavas*, the sons of Dakṣa... who grant extensive gifts (rain)..."

The phrase *vimucah napāt* applied to Pūṣan was already correctly interpreted by Grassmann<sup>32</sup> as "... Sohn der Befreiung, d.h. Befreier,

<sup>29</sup> RV. 5,41,12 the wind is called *ūrjām pati-*.

<sup>30</sup> See A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 468.

<sup>32</sup> Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1289.

Erretter".<sup>33</sup> RV. 1,42,1 this god, who is conceived as a guardian of roads, is implored to remove distress, the wolf, the waylayer, from the path; in this connection he is called "son of deliverance", the word *vi-muc-* like the simplex being used to express the idea of "delivering (from evil)". Ludwig<sup>34</sup> without translating the term *vimuc-* was at the time inclined to consider this the name of a fictitious father "der die eigenschaft Pūṣans als erlösers ausz bedrängnis motivieren soll". As *vimuco napāt* the same god is Ath.V. 6,112,3 invoked to deliver from ("wipe off") difficulties; in the same stanza *vimucas*, i.e. "deliverers", or rather "those that represent deliverance" – the word being the plural of the noun *vimuc-* "deliverance" – are implored actually to deliver those who are "bound". Griffith<sup>35</sup> explained the phrase by "deliverer, one who gives ample room and freedom". In a comparable way Pūṣan is in stanzas commemorating his wealth and liberality twice addressed as *vimocana-* "delivering, deliverer, means of delivering, deliverance": RV. 8,4,15; 16. I am afraid that Geldner's<sup>36</sup> explication "Ausspanner" – "Pūṣan ist der Gott der glücklichen Ausspannung, d.h. Einkehr oder Heimkehr von der Fahrt", though possible in itself, is in view of the above epithet less probable than Sāyaṇa's "deliverer from evil". Cf. also RV. 6,55,1. Atkins<sup>37</sup> is probably right in concluding that one should not attempt to assign to these phrase meanings which are too specific and too restricted.

A curious instance is *miho napāt-* RV. 1,37,11. As *mih-* means "down-pour of water or moisture" its "son" must be the manifestation of that idea, i.e. "a rain-shower". This sense suits the context very well: the Maruts cause the long and broad *miho napātam* to fall. RV. 5,32,4 is not so easy to understand: here the fiend or demon Śuṣṇa who is elsewhere stated to have been vanquished by Indra,<sup>38</sup> moves in darkness, increasing considerably and being "a son of downpour". The clue may perhaps be found in 8,40,10 where the victory over Śuṣṇa carries with it the possession

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the interpretations proposed by other scholars see S. D. Atkins, *Pūṣan in the Rig-veda* (Princeton, 1941), p. 33. See also R. N. Dandekar, "Pūṣan, the pastoral god of the Veda", *New Indian Antiquary*, 5 (1942), p. 57 f.

<sup>34</sup> A. Ludwig, *Der Rigveda... übersetzt*, I (Prag, 1876), p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> R. T. H. Griffith, *The hymns of the Rigveda translated*, I (Benares, 1920), p. 58 and 625.

<sup>36</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 290. Compare also I, p. 52 "Kind der Einkehr", weil er die Einkehr und damit die glückliche Erreichung des Reiseziels vermittelt.

<sup>37</sup> Atkins, *l.c.*

<sup>38</sup> See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 146 and 160 f.; A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, II (Breslau, 1929), p. 258 ff.; E. Sieg, "Sonnenrennen im Rgveda", *Nachr. Göttling. Ges. d. Wiss.*, 1928, p. 195 ff.



of the water in some not completely clear reminiscences of a myth relating Indra's victory over certain asuras and the annihilation of darkness by means of the wheel of the sun,<sup>39</sup> in the epithet *kuyava-* "accompanied by bad corn or harvest", and in *Śuṣṇa*'s moving in darkness: may this be taken to point to a representative of a form of mist or cloudy weather, which though obstructing sunshine does not result in rain? Anyhow, it is a fact that in the North of India and in the Deccan plateaus ground fogs due to temperature inversion are very common for two or three hours before and after sunrise; as they may be very heavy, first light can be bitterly cold and raw.<sup>40</sup>

The *Aśvins* are called *divo napātā* "sons of the sky". Although the locality of these twin gods is variously described they are (RV. 8,8,7 and elsewhere) said to come from heaven; the time of their appearance is the early dawn, with which they are also connected in Ait.Br. 2,15. Their car moves round the expanse of the sky (1,180,10), traversing heaven and earth in a single day (3,58,8). In short, although they are not distinctly connected with any definite phenomenon of light, they may safely be stated to originate in heaven and to represent its light, especially in the moments between dawn and sunrise. It is therefore reasonable that these gods should have been styled *divo napātā*, the term *dyaus* (*div-*) meaning: "sky, the light of heaven, light, day-light, day" (cf. e.g. RV. 1,182,1).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Sāyaṇa ad RV. 1,130,9.

<sup>40</sup> O. K. H. Spate, *India and Pakistan* (London, 1954), p. 42; 56.

<sup>41</sup> The *Aśvins* are often addressed as "lords of *śubh-*", an epithet which in the Rgveda is exclusively theirs. The traditional translation "Herren des Glanzes oder Schmuckes" (Grassmann), "Meister der Schönheit" (Geldner, but 10,40,4 "Gatten der Schönheit"), "lords of brilliance" etc. are in my opinion too restricted. The term *śubh-* does not only refer to what is aesthetically beautiful, but also to what is pleasant, agreeable, useful, to what is good in a moral sense, i.e. virtuous, honest, righteous, to what is auspicious, fortunate, and prosperous. In appreciating the phenomena in nature, the products of the soil, his environments in a large sense of the term primitive man does not as a rule accentuate the aesthetic aspect, attaching special value to their practical usefulness and magico-religious importance (see e.g. also G. van der Leeuw, *Wegen en Grenzen*, Amsterdam 1948; R. Bunzel, Art, in F. Boas, *General Anthropology*, Boston 1938, p. 535 ff.) It can therefore scarcely be doubted that for the Vedic Indians the break of the day was not only, and probably not in the first place, something beautiful to look at, but an auspicious and advantageous event, its beauty though aesthetically evaluated, being a sign of its auspicious character. Words such as *śubha-* could have so many 'meanings' – or, rather, their range of reference could be so broad (see the *Petrograd Dict.*, VII, 262 f. s.v. *śubha-*) – because there were no clear distinctions made between the good, the pure, the useful, the beautiful. A survey of the passages in which the *Aśvins* are addressed by this epithet shows that it occurs in connection with epithets such as *purubhu-* "bringing much use or enjoyment" (RV. 1,3,1, a frequent qualification of the gods); with prayers for protection, e.g. 1,34,6 "do ye bring the favour (or protection) of the beneficent to Thy son, threefold protection, O lords of

The same epithet is also applied to other gods, probably to Mitra and Varuṇa: RV. 3,38,5.

It should in this connection be remembered that Uṣas, Dawn, is constantly called the daughter of Dyaus, the Sky (RV. 1,92,5): it is clear that this goddess is a manifestation of heavenly light: appearing in the morning-light (1,113,7), she is dressed in light (1,124,3) and comes with light (5,80,5). Although the physical phenomenon is always present to the mind of the poet Uṣas is slightly 'personified'. Other 'deities' which in a similar way are called children of Dyaus – who did no more attain to a complete personality than his daughter – are beside Agni, Parjanya (rain), Sūrya (the sun), the Ādityas, the Maruts (storms) and the Aṅgirasas. The last mentioned group of 'deities' who are prominent in the Ṛgveda seem to have originally been conceived as a race of beings intermediate between gods and men. Though connected with Indra, the Maruts, the Ādityas and other deities, Agni is several times considered the foremost of them (RV. 1,75,2). They are the sons of Dyaus and at the same time his "men" (RV. 3,53,7; 10,67,2: *divas putrāsaḥ*);<sup>42</sup> RV. 10,62,4 they are styled "sons of the gods" (*devaputrāḥ*). If this epithet may be taken to express, or to imply, the idea of "representative of divine power" it suits the character of these beings very well: they are ṛṣis (ibid.), brahmans (7,42,1), institutors of sacrifice (10,67,2) by which they obtained immortality (10,62,1); they found Agni hidden in the wood (5,11,6). These activities are typical of those figures who, according to the belief of many peoples, initiated culture in the beginning of history.<sup>43</sup>

There has been much difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the original character of the divine figure known as *Apām napāt* "son of the waters". He has been supposed to be of lunar or solar nature, to have been a divinity connected with lightning, a fire-god born from the

*śubh-*": 47,5; 5,75,8; 8,5,10-12; 8,59,5; 10,93,6; for favour: 8,22,4; 6; 14; 59,3; 10,40,13; 8; in statements of the gods' beneficent activity: 10,40,4 "Ye lords bring that man who punctually sacrifices, refreshing (strengthening) food"; cf. 12 and especially 8,5,5; 10,131,4.

<sup>42</sup> See Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 242.

<sup>43</sup> "Die Heilbringer, Kulturhéroen... nehmen eine Stellung zwischen den Dämonen und den eigentlichen Gottheiten ein. Sie werden gewöhnlich als Menschen geschildert, die etwas entdeckten, erfanden und ihrem Volke brachten oder zeigten. Solche Taten werden in einen Dunst phantastischer Sagen gehüllt... (Diese Kulturhéroen) können wie zusammenfassende Personifikationen des gesamten Geschehens aufgefasst werden... Solche Personifikationen erscheinen in mannigfacher Gestalt als Mensch, Dämon, Tier oder Gottheit" (R. Thurnwald, *Des Menschengestes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren*, Berlin, 1951, p. 206). The Aṅgirasas, though invoked as gods, are also called "our (ancient) fathers" (RV. 1,62,2; 7,2).



cloud in lightning, etc.<sup>44</sup> According to Oldenberg<sup>45</sup> and Gray<sup>46</sup> *Apām napāt* was originally a water genius pure and simple, who became confused with a different deity, viz. the water-born Agni. This view was recently modified by Renou:<sup>47</sup> "vieille divinité des eaux associée à un culte lunaire (Hillebrandt), peut-être secondairement rapprochée d'Agni (Oldenberg)". It is indeed a fact that in the Avesta *Apām napāt* is a spirit of the waters, who lives in their depths: cf. e.g. Yt. 8,34 where he is described as distributing waters to the phenomenal world; 19,51 f. he dwells in the depths of the waters. It has in the second place been observed that the Vedic ritual emphasizes the water aspect of the deity. In the R̥gvedic sūkta 2,35, the only complete hymn of which he is the subject, his aqueous nature predominates: in st. 3 the waters are stated to surround the pure and bright *Apām Napāt*; in st. 4 these waters are young women attending to him. He grows strong within the waters (st. 7), is connected with the rivers (st. 1) etc. Moreover, the poet of R̥V. 10,30 which is addressed to the waters, implores him to grant the savoury water by which Indra has increased so as to become a hero (st. 4). There can be hardly any doubt that his very name also characterizes him as a spirit of the waters. What is remarkable is that he is described as a real child which is to be attended to, suckled and fed. We may perhaps look upon these passages as rare pieces of evidence of a tendency to take an interest in the feminine aspects of life and to find some vent for softer emotions in picturing the behaviour of a child, which in later times culminated in the long descriptions of the birth, education, and adventures of the divine child *Kṛṣṇa*.<sup>48</sup> In the poet's phantasy the waters assume the outward appearance of young women who nurse the child and bring it food. This child is, however, repeatedly described as shining and beaming. And here we should join those scholars who consider this child to have been confused with the water-born Agni, with lightning originating in the clouds which shines without fuel (st. 4). Thus the Son of the waters can be stated to

<sup>44</sup> For an incomplete résumé of the opinions see Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 70 and A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Harvard, 1925), p. 135 f. See also E. W. Fay, "The Aryan god of lightning", *Am. Journ. of Phil.*, 17,1; H. W. Magoun, "Apām Napāt in the R̥gveda", *Journ. Am. Or. Soc.*, 19, 2, p. 137.

<sup>45</sup> H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 117 ff.

<sup>46</sup> L. H. Gray, "The Indo-Iranian deity Apām Napāt", *Archiv für Religionswiss.*, 3, 18: the water-born Agni is Agni-lightning.

<sup>47</sup> L. Renou, in L. Renou et J. Filiozat, *L'Inde classique*, I (Paris, 1947), p. 326.

<sup>48</sup> For nymphs as nursing-mothers (the Greek *χουρομήτορες*) see also M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1949), p. 180 f.; cf. also B. Nyberg, *Kind und Erde* (Helsinki, 1931), p. 55 f.

become strong in the waters and to shine brightly in order to extend possession to those who worship him (st. 7).

Another phrase with *napāt* occurs in the Atharvaveda: 1,13,2; 3 homage is paid to the child of the *pravat*:- *namas te pravato napāt*, etc. The word *pravat*- denoting in general the idea of "slope, side of a mountain, sloping terrain" is usually taken to denote, in this connection, "the sloping height of the heavenly vault". Being the place of origin of lightning, the statement that "thou (i.e. lightning) gatherest heat (*tapas*) from there" (st. 2) is clear: deriving its origin from the celestial regions where is its highest abode (st. 3), it consists in heat (cf. also st. 3). In Ath.V. 1,26,3 the same expression is applied to, or co-ordinated with, the Maruts.

Proceeding now to discuss Agni's form *Tanūnapāt*<sup>49</sup> "Son of himself" or "the self-generated one", it should be observed that this name is chiefly used in the second stanza of the Āprī hymns; in these liturgical invitations introducing the animal sacrifice fire is invoked under various forms and names. *Tanūnapāt* is repeatedly asked to make the sacrifice savoury, to take it to the gods and to distribute it. This does not seem to add anything to our subject. The term is explained RV. 3,29,11: "Tanūnapāt is the name of the divine one (*āsura*- "belonging or relating to the asuras") as a germ (*garbha*-), he becomes *Narāśaṃsa* when he is born".<sup>50</sup> In the Śat.Br. 3,4,2,5 ff. he is called the powerful (*śākvara*-) one "who blows there, who, being the looker-on (witness) of the living beings enters them as breath".<sup>51</sup> Has *Tanūnapāt* also been a form of the wind, "generated by himself"?<sup>52</sup> As the original application or applications of this term are rather obscure it does not seem possible to make a positive statement about it. Yet there is room for three observations. Hariv. 253,5 (= 13931) *svayoni*- is an epithet of fire: "arising out of itself", obviously referring to fire which comes into existence 'spontaneously', i.e. not derived from other fire, or without a visible cause. In the second place fire is, and was, often engendered by, i.e. taken from, fire. Lastly, similar epithets are also found in other countries: the old Egyptian heaven- or sun-god for instance was always called "he who originates

<sup>49</sup> See Hillebrandt, *o.c.*<sup>2</sup>, I, p. 121 f.; Keith, *o.c.*, p. 166.

<sup>50</sup> The explications furnished by Yāska, Nir. 8,5 are of no use.

<sup>51</sup> See also Keith, *o.c.*, p. 138.

<sup>52</sup> For *Tanūnapāt* see also A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, II (Paris, 1883), p. 99 f.; improbable: "thunder and lightning" E. W. Fay, *Proc. Am. Or. Soc.*, 1884, p. CLXXIV (*JAOS*, 16).



himself". Thus, Van der Leeuw<sup>52</sup> observes, "in the world above potent life manifests itself".

### VIII

The relation existing between Agni and *sahas* may also be elucidated by a study of parallels. Although space forbids to institute a thorough investigation of the material available, it is worth while to make some remarks on the often mentioned 'power-concept' *tejas*.<sup>1</sup> As already stated Agni is also *tejas* "fiery energy, splendour, efficacy, majesty, supernatural potency, keenness"; another of the vast category of power-substances which may make their influence felt.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly he is implored to confer it on those praying: AV. 7,89,4 "thou art *tejas*, confer *tejas* on me" (*tejo 'si tejo mayi dhehi*). Elsewhere in this corpus an amulet is addressed in the same way: 19,31,12 "*tejas* art thou, confer *tejas* (hold *tejas* fast) on me" (*tejo 'si tejo mayi dhārāyādhi*). Being a fiery principle of supranormal energy, "un rayonnement calorifique d'activité",<sup>3</sup> which for instance is set (*āhitam*) in the sun (AV. 10,3,17), belongs to poison (AV. 10,4,25), to men (AV. 10,5,36) or may assume the form of an amulet which is believed to impart the selfsame power to a human being (AV. 19,31,12), *tejas* is in one of its earliest occurrences, RV. 1,56,2 associated with *sahas*: *patiṃ dakṣasya vidathasya nū saho giriṃ na venā adhi roha tejasā* (Soma is probably addressed): "ascend unto the lord of *dakṣa*- ('ability'), unto the power<sup>4</sup> of wisdom, with *tejas*, like spies (?) a mountain". The author of AV. 1,35,3 ascribes *tejas*, *vyotis* (light) and *ojas* (creative vitality) and physical strength to the waters: by means of a magical act described in Kauś. 11,19 and 52,20 these useful potencies were transferred to a human being who wished to increase in power and fortune. A similar transference is alluded to in AV. 7,89,4 (= VS. 38,25 etc.) where pieces of kindling-wood are implored to impart to the person praying those qualities which are its own and which may be inferred from its names: "fuel (*edhas*) art thou, may I be prosperous (*edhiṣṭya*). . . *tejas* art thou, put *tejas* in me" (*tejo mayi dhehi*)." AV. 2,19

<sup>52</sup> Van der Leeuw, *Religion*, p. 66.

<sup>1</sup> This term has often attracted the attention of scholars: J. Ph. Vogel, *Het Sanskrit woord tejas* (= *gloed, vuur*) in *de betekenis van magische kracht* (Amsterdam, 1930) (very incomplete, no discussion of Vedic evidence); J. Filliozat, *La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne* (Paris, 1949), p. 135 f.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's treatise *Ojas*, p. 49 f.

<sup>3</sup> Filliozat, *o.c.*, p. 22 and 136.

<sup>4</sup> If *sahas* is, with Geldner (*o.c.*, I, p. 72) to be taken as *sahasā*: "with the power. . ."

*tejas* is with *tapas* ("heat"), *haras* ("warmth"), *arcis* ("gleam"), *śocis* ("glow"), a power in the possession of Agni, or rather a constituent element of this great divinity: "with the *tejas* etc. which are thine, make him lose his *tejas* who hates us, whom we hate". Royalty being divine, a kingdom may also "possess" *tejas*: AV. 5,19,4 a brahman's cow, being cooked, dispels the *tejas* of a kingdom.

Elsewhere in the same corpus, a man prays that his *tejas* may be saved: 9,1,16 f. "as the bees and flies smear here honey upon honey, so, O Aśvins, let my *varcas* ("splendour"), *tejas*, physical strength and *ojas* be maintained": the simile shed some light on the ideas fostered by Vedic man with regard to the transference or maintenance of these powers. In another part of the Atharvaveda, 13,1,14 the *tejāṃsi* (plural) are stated to have come to the person speaking because the sun disposed the sacrifice for Viśvakarman. *Tejas* can also be given to a man by binding an amulet round part of his body: AV. 3,5,8 "I fasten you on (him), O amulet, together with the *tejas* of the year": again the conception that a power-substance, though in a way an independent entity, is associated with a material bearer of power. This is very clear in AV. 10,6,22 ff. where an amulet "has come here to me, together with sap and splendour, with goats and sheep, with food and progeny, with growth and greatness, with . . . *tejas*, *yaśas*, etc. etc." AV. 10,3,17 an amulet is expected to sprinkle a man with *tejas* and to anoint him with *yaśas*. In 5,28,13 the same *tejas* of the year is applied without any connection with an amulet. From these passages it may be inferred that the instrumental of this word when occurring in passages such as 9,2,15 "let the Āditya (the sun) rising with property and *tejas*, thrust my rivals downward" is as to its sense a real nominal instrumental, no adverb. This is also evident in passages such as AV. 19,31,3 "let Dhātār (the god who is not so much a creator as a disposer, arranger or establisher) assign to me prosperity through the *tejas* of (this) amulet": here also the amulet and its property are distinct, and the 'power-substance' *tejas* obviously constitutes a supra-normal and supra-phenomenal element by means or agency of which the amulet can be the useful instrument applied in rites for obtaining a great variety of desires. In a comparable way the god Agni who as we know is intimately connected with *tejas* and also with the *trivṛt* stoma (a form of chant), confers *tejas* upon a person by means of that stoma: PB. 17,5,3. An amulet may, however, also exert a similar influence by itself: AV. 19,36,1 "(it) has by its *tejas* caused the demons . . . to disappear".

In addition to the above observations some brāhmaṇa passages, chosen at random, may be quoted in order to illustrate the connection of these



powers and their bearers. A propos of an oblation dedicated to Indra and Agni it is said: "When Indra slew Vṛtra, his specific heroism (*indriyaṃ vīryam*) went out of him, he who was frightened; by this sacrifice he replaced it into himself. In like manner does the sacrificer. . . for Agni is *tejas* and Indra is *indriyaṃ vīryam*; he (the sacrificer) thinks: "may I be consecrated, having embraced (assumed) both these powers (*vīrye*)" " (Śat.Br. 5,2,3,8). By sacrificing with the formula *Agnaye svāhā* one sprinkles (endows) the sacrificer with *tejas*, for Agni is *tejas* (ibid. 5,3,5,8). In the brāhmaṇas, *tejas* is, indeed, the quality pre-eminently assigned to the god of fire, cf. e.g. Śat.Br. 13,2,6,9. The *tejas* of an entity or phenomenon may assume a material form: Śat.Br. 10,2,6,2 the sun is called the *tejas* of the year.

The powers *tejas* and *vīrya*- may be embodied in a gold plate (Śat.Br. 6,7,1,4; 9), by wearing such a plate one transfers these powers; cf. also ibid. 3,4,1,7. The *tejas*, i.e. in casu the sharpness of Indra's thunderbolt falling down became a definite *sāman* (chant: PB. 8,8,9). That *tejas* can be detached from its bearer appears also from Śat.Br. 7,4,1,39: when Prajāpati was relaxed Agni took his (i.e. P.'s) *tejas* and carried it off to the south; in a similar way Indra took away his *ojas*, carrying it to the north; cf. also 41. Śat.Br. 12,7,2,1 a man's *tejas*, *indriya*- and *vīrya*- can under definite circumstances depart from him. Cf. ibid. 13,2,6,3; 7. If a man's sacrificial post sprouts leaves his *tejas*, *indriya*-, *vīrya*-, food, children, and cattle (notice the from a modern point of view heterogeneous character of this sequence) recede from him (PB. 9,10,2). These potencies may also be stolen from their bearers: Jaim.Br. 1,160; 2,242. *Tejas* being separated from its original bearer may develop into something else: Śat.Br. 10,6,5,2 the *tejas* and essence (*rasa*-) of the Primeval Being which wearied itself and was heated, developed into fire (*tasya śrāntasya taptasya tejo raso niravartatāgniḥ*). In a similar way Indra's *tejas* flowed from his eyes and became the he-goat (Śat.Br. 12,7,1,2). The Aśvins are stated to be *tejas* and visual faculty (Śat.Br. 12,7,2,4) and by sacrificing to these gods the priest bestows visual faculty and *tejas* on the sacrificer (cf. ibid. 12,7,3,12). Similarly, ghee was believed to be a variety of *tejas* (cf. also PB. 12,10,18 and, in later times, Varāhamihira, BS. 48,52 f.); by certain manipulations with this substance it is possible to cause the god Prajāpati to be abundantly furnished with *tejas* (13,1,1,1); cf. also 13,2,1,2. The chant called *trivṛt*- is *tejas*; by applying it one obtains *tejas* (PB. 2,1,7,2). The belief which we have already noticed in another part of this publication, viz. that an entity which is a certain power is able to engender that power or to bestow it on others is for instance present in

Vāj.Samh. 20,23 "enkindling art thou (a kindling-stick is addressed), *tejas* art thou, lay thou *tejas* into me".

From the above views of *tejas* and its behaviour and influence a variety of inferences were made. The redundant *tejas* and essence (*rasa*-) of the *prṣṭhasāmāns* for instance were collected by the gods and then became another chant (PB. 8,9,6), and because this chant is the lustre of all the *prṣṭhas* they did not apply it for a jealous tribesman, for in that case the chant, which means lustre and hence prosperity, would fall to the share of that rival (ibid. 7<sup>5</sup>). Because *tejas* and *brahmavarcasa*- ("spiritual lustre") may be regarded as equal, and the *gāyatrī* metre is *tejas*, one may by chanting *gāyatrī*s obtain *brahmavarcasa*- (PV. 8,10,2). From a curious passage of the Jaiminiya-brāhmaṇa 3,165, it appears that even Agni was not always in the possession of flames and rays. He obtained them by utilizing a definite laud, and hence came also into possession of *tejas* and *brahmavarcasa*-. As power-substances in general are occasionally believed to be able to behave like rational beings, it is not surprising to find that *tejas* after having been emitted by the One Being thought: "may I grow and become many" (Ch.Up. 6,2,3).

According to the famous Mānava-dharmaśāstra the earthly ruler is formed or constituted of the supranormal principle of fiery energy (*tejas*) of all the gods (Manu 7,11):<sup>6</sup> "He in whose favour resides Padmā, the goddess of fortune, in whose valour dwells victory, in whose anger abides death, is formed of the *tejas* of all gods". This *tejas* was, e.g. by Kālidāsa (Ragh. 3,15) believed to be innate in princes: immediately after his birth the famous Raghu, by his innate *tejas* (*nijena tejasā*) deprived the lamps of their lustre. In a late text like the Kathāsaritsāgara kings are still described as illuminating the quarters of the sky by their *tejas* (121,21;45). Epic accounts of powerful beings whose *tejas* manifested itself already before birth are not rare: Mbh. 1,6,3: the demon Puloman was killed – i.e. burnt to ashes – by the *tejas* of Pulomā's unborn child. The same epos makes 1,47,13 mention of someone who before his birth was very rich in *tejas*, resplendent like Agni himself. This innateness of *tejas* was also taken for granted by the Buddhists: the plakṣa tree to which Buddha's mother stretched out her hand, bent down because of the *tejas* of the future Buddha with whom she was

<sup>5</sup> See also W. Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this passage see "Ancient Indian Kingship", *Numen*, 3 (1956), p. 61 ff. and "The sacred character of Ancient Indian Kingship", *Proceedings of the VIIIth Intern. Congress for the History of Religions (Atti dell' VIII Congresso Intern. di storia delle Religioni)* (Rome, 1955), p. 173 f.



pregnant (Lalit. I, p. 83 L.).<sup>7</sup> From several epic passages it may also be learned that *tejas* can change its bearers or substrata. Mbh. 8,91,50 ff. it is for instance related that when Arjuna severed Karna's head from his body his *tejas*, coming out of the body passed through the sky and entered into the sun. As Karna was a son of the sun (Sūrya),<sup>8</sup> the conclusion seems to be warranted that at the moment of his death his *tejas*, his supranormal essence, returned to its origin. The *tejas* of a hero killed on the battlefield might however also pass over to the man who slew him: in the Mbh. 2,45,25 ff. it is told how Kṛṣṇa killed the king of Cedi, whose *tejas* leaving his body ascended like the sun in the sky. That *tejas* then adored Kṛṣṇa and entered his body. Such an occurrence – in reading which one is reminded of the belief underlying head hunting<sup>9</sup> – was, however, not very common, since all the princes who witnessed it thought it very wonderful.

A special form of transference interests us most, because it involves the creation of a *tejas* possessing a new class of entities: according to the Mahābhārata 3,3,7 "the lord of the plants (i.e. Soma) produced by means of water the medicinal herbs, withdrawing *tejas* from heaven (*divas tejaḥ samuddhṛtya*)". Again the co-operation of a 'natural' and a 'supernatural' element in generating useful bearers of power.

There is also in post-Vedic scriptures evidence of the use of the term *tejas* to indicate the person or the object bearing or housing it. In Manu 7,28 *daṇḍa*- "punishment" is called a very great *tejas*. This does not mean "p. (possesses) a very bright lustre" (Bühler<sup>10</sup>): its supranormal character is evident from what follows: "it is hard to be administered by men with unformed (uneducated) minds, it strikes the king who swerves from his duty". An enumeration of entities or phenomena which, each of them, is a *tejas* is given in Mbh. 13,104,62 ff.: fire, cow, brahman, sun, man, nakṣatras (constellation). Great ṛṣis, earth, fire, are elsewhere (13,22,10) likewise called *tejas*.

Especially interesting are those places which are explicit in attributing to *tejas* the power to make an entity what it ought to be, or – to express it otherwise – which show that this supranormal principle – like *sahas* and other power-substances of the same character – is a necessity in those

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also the passage Lalit. I, p. 128–136, which is too long to be quoted here.

<sup>8</sup> See also E. W. Hopkins (Strasburg, 1915), p. 87 f. Karna was a so-called partial incarnation of the sun.

<sup>9</sup> If this is performed in the 'ceremonious' way, the victor is "filled" with the power and prowess of his victim. See e.g. R. Thurnwald, *Des Menschegeistes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren* (Berlin, 1951), p. 147.

<sup>10</sup> G. Bühler, *The laws of Manu* (Oxford, 1886), p. 220.

persons, objects, or phenomena which are in a specific way powerful. Even so late an author as Jonarāja who continued Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī (or History of Kashmir; ± 1448 A.D.) furnishes us with the following important information (743 ff.). "When Kashmir was occupied by barbarians who polluted it by their corrupted manners, the Vedas, the gods and brahmans lost their power. The gods who had, like fire-flies, manifested their *tejas*, no longer displayed it as a consequence of the evil times. These were also the reasons why the divinities left their images like serpents who leave their skins. When the special *tejas* was withdrawn, by the gods, from the images there was nothing left to these than stone, and the holy texts were mere words." It is perfectly plain that without the specific power called *tejas* the images of the gods are pieces of carved stone, no real representatives of divinities.

Some other quotations may serve to elucidate the mutual relations between these power-substances and their bearers. R.V. 5,11,5 the poet is quite explicit in stating that Agni is filled with *śavas* and strengthened by the songs of praise as the river Sindhu is filled and enlarged by its tributaries<sup>11</sup> (*tvām girāḥ sindhum ivāvanīr mahīr ā prṇanti śavasā vardhayanti ca*): the conclusion seems to be warranted that the *śavas* helps to constitute Agni, fusing with him, as the tributaries co-operate in forming one mighty river, becoming part of it. The correct interpretation of this stanza may lead to the right understanding of passages such as 1,102,1 *tam utsave ca prasave ca sāsahim indraṁ devāsaḥ śavasāmadann anu*. Differing with Roth, Grassmann, Geldner and other authorities I would hold this line to mean "the gods acclaimed Indra, victorious in the festival and the race ("generation of power"), with (by means of) heroic power",<sup>12</sup> acclamation being almost universally considered a potent means of strengthening or stimulating a hero, champion, or performer of great deeds.<sup>13</sup> A translation like Geldner's "...jubelten die Götter mächtig zu"<sup>14</sup> is therefore not completely adequate, although the possibility of a 'weakening' of the sense (or stereotyped phraseology) must be taken into account. The same phrase occurs 10,73,8 *anu tvā (sc. Indram) devāḥ śavasā madanti*. It may be illustrated by 6,15,11 which declares Agni to mix or put together with, or to fill, the inspired poet with, wealth

<sup>11</sup> For the effects of praise see, inter alia, Geldner, on R.V. 1,27,1; H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I (Göttingen, 1951), p. 22 f.

<sup>12</sup> For the interpretation of this verse and especially that of the term *utsava*- see the author's article in *India Antiqua, Festschrift J. Ph. Vogel* (Leiden, 1947), p. 146 ff.

<sup>13</sup> For the signification of applause and approval see "Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas", *Acta Or.*, 19, p. 437 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 132.



and heroic power (*tam it prṇakṣi śavasota rāyā*), the verb *pre-*, though often admitting of translations such as "to satiate, to grant bountifully", often conveys the sense of "mingling, uniting, bringing into contact with"; the original meaning may have been that of "filling up": 9,97,12 the divine Soma is said to "fill up" the gods by his (its) juice; 6,20,6 Indra "filled up" one of his favourites with wealth, comfort, and welfare; 4,38,10 words are mingled (soaked) with honey; 1,110,4 *sam aprcyanta dhītibhiḥ* "sahen in Jahresfrist ihre Erwartungen erfüllt" (Geldner); 10,10,11 *tanvā me tanvaṃ sam pīrgdhi* "unite your body with mine".

It is in harmony with the ideas underlying the above phrases with *śavasā* (cf. also R.V. 1,167,9; 2,22,4; 6,32,5) that the Aśvins are 7,74,6 described as having swollen, or having been increased by their own *śavas* (*svena śavasā śūśuvuḥ*), and the Maruts (7,57,1) during the sacrifices inebriate themselves on the soma juice *śavasā*; the instrumental is in my opinion more than an adverb ("kräftiglich" Geldner), the genitive *madhvaḥ* being of course limitative (partitive), *śavasā* may probably be taken to have denoted, as a second complement, the power-substance by which they fortify themselves. The stimulating and strengthening effect of the draught, and Soma's heroic character are too well known to need comment.<sup>15</sup>

An instrumental expressing the general idea of being "associated with" may perhaps also be preferred to an adverbial instrumental in cases such as R.V. 8,92,6 *asya pītvā madānām devo devasyaujasā* "the god having drunk of the god's (soma's) liquor (providing himself) with *ojas*"; cf. 9,97,41 where the strained soma is said to put *ojas* into the same god Indra and 9,34,1 where Soma himself disposes of *ojas*. The question might also be posed whether R.V. 9,35,2 "do Thou purify Thyself as a bearer of our wealth with *ojas*" the form *ojasā* is purely 'adverbial' or rather means "on the strength of Thine innate *ojas*" which, then, is expected to be beneficial to those praying: the act of purifying may even produce refreshment (9,65,13 *iṣam pavasva*). Cf. also 9,39,3 *ā tviṣṇi dadhāna ojasā* "durch seine Stärke Machtglanz annehmend" (Geldner). An unambiguous instance is 9,52,2: "Soma purify Thyself with a hundred acts of help (favours) giving wealth"; 9,62,25 (for *ūtibhiḥ* see e.g. 9,4,5; 6). R.V. 9,65,14 *ā kalaśā anūṣatendo dhārābhir ojasā* may, along this train of thought, have meant: "die Krüge erbrausten mit Kraft, O Indra, durch deine Ströme", not "...kräftiglich", the *ojas* being a beneficial accompaniment of the process (cf. 9,64,18). In other passages (e.g.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 109 f.

10,65,2) the non-adverbial character of the instrumental is evident. In 8,97,11 there can be no doubt that *ojas* and *ūti-* (in the plural) are more or less autonomous entities joining the god Indra: "the panegyrists praised Indra that he should drink soma... in order to strengthen him... for being united with his creative power and succouring favours he holds to his usual conduct (or sphere of action)": *dhṛtavrato hy ojasā sam ūtibhiḥ*.

Some texts exhibiting the word *śavas* are of more special interest for the matter under discussion. There are two places where *śavasā* combines with *sūnuḥ*, viz. RV. 1,27,2 and 62,9, the former referring to Agni, the latter to Indra. Geldner's interpretations are: "er, unser Sohn durch (unsere) Kraft" (*sa ghā naḥ sūnuḥ śavasā*) and "der Sohn der Gewalt". On the one hand, the pronoun *naḥ* in 1,27,2 may belong to one of the following adjectives, anticipating *asmākam* in the last part of the stanza; on the other hand it would in itself be preferable to connect *naḥ* with *sūnuḥ*, mentally adding *jātaḥ* or a term to that effect before *śavasā*: "our son, born with *śavas*". However, a solution which would reasonably explain both passages might perhaps be provided by the assumption that *sūnuḥ śavasā* is a sort of contamination arisen from the frequent combinations of *sūnuḥ* and a genitive and the constructions of *jātaḥ*, *jāyamānaḥ* etc. with an instrumental (1,130,9; 96,1). Or if this supposition would appear to be farfetched, one might compare instrumentals like that in 1,7,3 *gobhir adrim* "the rock with the cows"; cf. 10,42,4.<sup>16</sup>

In RV. 1,127,11 the word *śavasā* combines with the verb *math-*, which is often used to denote the process of kindling fire by friction, and the idea of generating sons by performing the process suggested by this verb: as is well known, the production of fire is compared to the sexual act.<sup>17</sup> The line (*mahi stotṛbhyo... suvīryam mathir ugro na śavasā*) was translated by Geldner:<sup>18</sup> "Reib (Agni) uns Sängern... grosse gute Sohnschaft heraus, wie ein Starker (das Feuer) mit Kraft (ausreibt)". It is however doubtful whether the adjective *ugra-* which as a rule characterizes beings of eminent power<sup>19</sup> should be taken as being applied to a man making

<sup>16</sup> For comparable constructions in Greek see R. Kühner-B. Gerth, *Ausf. Grammatik der griechischen Sprache, Satzlehre* I<sup>4</sup> (Leverkusen, 1955), p. 426 ff.; in Latin we find Cic. Mur. 36 *Philippum summo ingenio*, in Lithuanian *merga ilgais plaukais* "a girl with long hair"; German and other instances: K. Brugmann, *Grundriss der vergl. Gramm. d. indogerm. Sprachen*, II, 2, p. 524 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also RV. 3, 29,1 f.

<sup>18</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, I<sup>4</sup>, p. 178. H. Grassmann, *Rig-veda* (Leipzig, 1876), translated: "Errege grosse Heldenkraft, o mächtiger, den Sängern, starker du an Kraft."

<sup>19</sup> See the author's *Ojas*, p. 13 ff.; cf. on the other hand RV. 10,103,13 (*Ojas*, p. 16).



fire if it is possible to adopt another interpretation. Why should we not cancel the words added in brackets by the German author, translating: "generate for us an abundance of heroic sons, like an *ugra*- one (i.e. a being possessed by the vital and creative potency called *ojas*) with (Thy<sup>20</sup>) heroic power"?

## IX

Places are not rare in the Vedic literature where specific powers, belonging to definite provinces of nature, are said to be in, or to be introduced into, a person. AthV. 1,35,3 "we 'carry over' into him – the man favoured by the officiant and the priest reciting the incantation – the *tejas* (energy), light, *ojas* and strength (*balam*) of the waters, and the manly powers (*vīryāṇi*) of the forest trees, as in Indra Indra's specific powers (*indriyāṇi*)"; the simile no doubt intends to emphasize that these qualities are to be inalienable and characteristic of that man.<sup>1</sup> AthV. 10,3,17 "as the sun shines very brightly, as *tejas* is placed in it (notice this expression), so let the amulet fix in me renown, prosperity; let it sprinkle me with *tejas*, let it anoint me with *yaśas* ("honour, glory")". The sun indeed may, in Vedic phraseology, be depicted as the one who has assumed the *tejas* of the loftiest one (13,3,5). *Tejas* may, like fortune (*bhaga*-), splendour (*varcas*), glory (*yaśas*) and milk (*payas*), be regarded as 'something' which has entered the cows: 14,2,53, ff. AV. 3,5,8, lines accompanying the binding on of an amulet for general prosperity: "with the *tejas* of the year I bind thee on, O amulet" (*tejasā... badhnāmi tvā*): it should be noticed that a distinction is made between the amulet and the *tejas*, which moreover belongs to the year.<sup>2</sup> This may throw light on stanza 1 "the amulet... *ojas* of the gods, milk (*payas*) of the herbs, let it quicken me with splendour (*varcas*)": the amulet, representing specific powers exerts its beneficial influence by means of a "Daseinsmacht" of a certain independent character; and in stanza 3 "let the gods give us (the amulet) to wear, together with length of life (*sahāyusā*)", the full span of life being obviously regarded as a more or less independent entity, substance or 'power' accompanying the amulet<sup>3</sup> which therefore is worn "in order to reach the age of a hundred years" (st. 4). See also 10,6,22 ff.: an amulet which is a destruction of the asuras has come together with sap,

<sup>20</sup> This word might be left out. Compare also Sāyaṇa's commentary.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. also AthV. 9, 1,17; 10,4,25.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also 5,28,13.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. also 9,2,15.

food, greatness, splendour, fortune, etc. The salutary effect of powerful objects can also be expressed by verbs like anointing (a person with a specific power): 10,3,17 ff. Sometimes a personal being of divine rank has a hand in the matter: 19,31,3 "let Dhātār assign to me prosperity through the *tejas* of the amulet". This remark leads us to mention 19,45,6 ff. where various divinities are requested to favour (assist: *av-*) a man with their specific quality, Bhaga with "fortune" (*bhaga-*), the Maruts with troops, Indra with his special power called *indriya-*, Agni with "fire" (*agni-*): *agnir māgnināvatu*; the commentary which as a rule is of little use is uncertain whether by *agninā* "with fire" is meant "by his nature of being fire" or "accompanied by a fire which is another embodiment of him and which has the properties of purifying etc. (which are proper to Agni)". AV. 13,1,30 Agni's *tejas* (the word is in the plural) is a means of taking hold of rivals.

Gods may be 'filled' with power in various ways. Although it is beyond the scope of this investigation to enumerate the relevant passages as completely as possible some Vedic texts may be of interest. Indra must be pervaded by his specific power, *indriyam* (RV. 1,84,1) like space by the sun-beams. Agni is RV. 1,145,3 related to have assumed his *rabhas*, i.e. "ardour" or "impetuosity" when he was only a child. The verb used, *ādatta*, which might also be translated by "took, seized, grasped, etc." is too general to admit of any conclusion with regard to the nature of the process meant. RV. 1,144,2 this process is described as "sucking in" or "absorbing", the object being *svadhā*,<sup>4</sup> i.e. something like "his specific vitality or energy, his instinct, genius and natural ability".

Very often power is put or placed in a being: RV. 1,51,7 "in Thee (Indra) all "strength or courage" (*taviṣī*) has been placed (*hita-*) together"; 1,80,8 strength is placed in Indra's arms. Agni holds all manly powers (courage etc.: *nṛmṇā*) in his hand: RV. 1,67,3. The gods have concentrated all *ojāṃsi* in Indra: RV. 1,80,15. But Soma's virility (*vr̥ṣṇyam* "Bullenstärke" Geldner) must "come together (assemble) from all sides" (RV. 1,91,16); cf. 1,71,7 "all *pr̥kṣas* ("refreshments") assemble in Agni". Or a definite power simply is in a god: RV. 1,5,9 "(Indra) in whom is all manly strength (*paum̐syā*)".

The specific power or faculty of a god may however also be generated. RV. 1,85,2 the Maruts have as Indra's bards, singing his eulogies,

<sup>4</sup> See the long note on the meanings of this word in Geldner's *Rigveda in Auswahl*, I (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 207 f.



generated the power called *indriyam* ("indrische Kraft" Geldner): the creative power of praising. Cf. also RV. 1,56,1.

It may be produced by the skill of the carpenter or architect: see e.g. RV. 1,51,10 "when Uśanas fashioned for you *sahas* by means of *sahas*": if the god in achieving this deed did not employ *sahas* himself he would not be able to produce *sahas*.

Or a god may increase in greatness spontaneously (RV. 1,85,7), or it may, in a general way, be imparted to him (1,160,5). Elsewhere gods are stated to assume forms and manly or heroic powers (1,108,5).

Sometimes the verb used for assuming or transferring power is clearly dictated by an image or simile to which the poet resorts in order to elucidate his view of these processes. It will be remembered that RV. 1,130,4 Indra is addressed as follows: "Clothing thyself with *ojas*, *śavas* (pl.) and greatness (*majmanā*) – which in this context comes to girding on these 'requisites' – thou fellest the trees like a carpenter, with an axe thou fellest them." The question arises as to how far these words were an image, or how far they attest any conscious reflection on the relations between a god and his faculties.

Or the divinity and the element are distinguished in such a way that the former is described as having "entered" into the latter: AV. 4,39,9 "Agni is continually to be found in the fire" (*agnāṁ agniś carati praviṣṭaḥ*; more 'literally': "Agni continues having entered into the fire"). But Agni has also entered the waters in which king Varuṇa, Soma and all the gods revel in vigour (RV. 7,49,4 *ūrjāṁ madanti*, "sich Stärke antrinken"). Oblations are prescribed to that fire which is within soma and the cows, and which has entered into the birds, other animals and men (AV. 3,21,2). The same idea of entering occurs in a variety of communications about the interrelations of powers, beings, and phenomena. In preparing the water for bathing the bride a series of stanzas should (see Kauś. 75,25) be recited in which "splendour" (*varcaḥ*), "brilliancy" or rather "energy" (*tejas*), "fortune" (*bhaga-*), "glory" (*yaśas*), "strengthening drink" (*payas*) and "sap" (*rasa-*) – powers which are stated to have "entered into" the cows – are united with the young woman: *varco* (etc.) *goṣu praviṣṭāṇi yat tenemāṇi saṁi sṛjāmasi*. AV. 12,5,41 the *brahman*-cow is said to have become the flesh-eating Agni, and as such to enter into the *brahman*-scather in order to eat him. Fever has been born when Agni, having entered the waters, burned them (AV. 1,25,1): we might conclude from this statement that Fever owes its existence to Agni. There is no use in dwelling on the parallelism between these occurrences of verbs of "entering" and those in connection with demons, diseases, etc. which –

no doubt along similar lines of reasoning – were believed to enter their victims: AV. 6,85,1 "the yakṣma<sup>5</sup> has entered this man".

Power may be cut or lopped off; see RV. 1,51,7; 1,80,10 "Indra chopped off Vṛtra's *taviṣī* ("courage, strength"). It may on the other hand be enhanced or strengthened: RV. 1,52,7 Tvaṣtar is stated to have enhanced Indra's *śavas*. Man can add to a god's power by praise and worship: RV. 1,56,4 "when the divine power (courage: *taviṣī*) strengthened by you (i.e. the eulogist, Sāyaṇa) follows Indra in order to assist him like the Sun (follows) Dawn...".

In discussing the question as to how far the gods were conceived as persons attention should be drawn to the frequent references to their dimensions and proportions. What does it for instance mean that Indra had enclosed, with his greatness, both heaven and earth?: 1,33,9 where the god in this condition blew away the enemies of the Āryans; 1,100,14 f. where he is asked to assist those praying – "neither the gods with their divinity, nor mortal beings, nor even the waters reached the end of his might" –. Here the god is rather an omnipresent cosmic power believed to be in the possession of thought, consciousness, etc. Cf. also 1,55,1 where the god extends himself beyond heaven and earth; cf. 1,61,8; 9; 81,5; 8,88,5 etc. 1,59,5 Agni is in the possession of a similar dimension. RV. 1,8,5 "Indra is great and in addition to this must greatness belong to (come to) him; like the sky in extensiveness is his heroic power". Of value for the understanding of these divine persons is also a passage such as RV. 1,103,1: that highest *indriya-* (i.e. Indra's characteristic faculty and potency) is far away,<sup>6</sup> in heaven, this (*indriya-*) is here, formerly held (or kept, or born) by the sages. Although the god's *indriya-* forms unity (see 1,103,1 d), part of it is clearly transcendent, that is to say: the god is more than his manifestations; there is an aspect of his being which being beyond our intelligence does not belong to the phenomenal world.<sup>7</sup> See e.g. also RV. 1,24,6.<sup>8</sup>

Some importance may be attached to incidental references to the weight or dimensions of a god's power, strength or fame: RV. 1,102,7 "Thy fame, O Indra, is more than a hundred or a thousand"; 1,52,12 the earth is the counterpart of, or counterpoise to, Indra's *ojas*, but in st. 13 the god himself is the counterpoise to the earth.

<sup>5</sup> Now see Filliozat, *o.c.*, p. 83 f.

<sup>6</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also RV. 1,54,1; 100,15 etc.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. C. W. J. van der Linden, *The concept of deva in the Vedic age* (Thesis Utrecht, 1954).



There are, however, differences in detail. In RV. 1,163, a text praising the sacrificial horse, a distinction is made between the animal itself and its prototype in heaven (st. 7), its "highest form" (*rūpam uttamam*), which is in part of the 'hymn' (see e.g. st. 6) identified with the sun horse.

Sometimes a clear distinction is made between a god and his power: RV. 1,103,7 *anu tvā patnīr hr̥ṣitaṃ vayas ca viśve devāso amadann anu tvā* "Thou, who art excited (eager for combat and victory) the spouses (of the gods) and all the gods applaud, thee and (thy) youthful strength". The use of the particle *ca* shows that *vayas*, in a way, is a 'complement' of the god himself.<sup>9</sup> A similar complementary relation is also expressed in mythological terms: Indra was already at a comparatively early date considered as being the husband of *Śacī*, his 'personified' might. As is well known this conception was to have a great future in the later Śāktist movements<sup>10</sup> which admit the existence of 'energies' of the divinity by means of which the latter manifests itself, creates the universe and exerts activity. According to the Viṣṇuists among these religious currents God (i.e. Viṣṇu) possesses a *śakti*- which has the same relation to him as the light of the sun to this luminary itself, or as an attribute to its bearer. In the R̥gveda Indra's *śakti*- with which the god is active in the interest of his worshippers is called "good, gracious, auspicious" (*bhadrā*: 1,83,3). Elsewhere in the same corpus the wish is expressed that the god's *śakti*- ("Wirken" Geldner) will do good to the eulogist (7,20,10). The same 'power' is also attributed to the Aśvins, e.g. 7,68,8 and the manes 1,109,3.

The gods in general are called "sons of 'immortality'": RV. 10,13,1 (*amṛtasya putrāḥ*) where they are said to have assumed "celestial appearances" (*dhāmāni divyāni*),<sup>11</sup> a conception which is in complete harmony with the above view that "son of immortality" comes to "representative of immortality".<sup>12</sup> A parallel may be adduced from the Atharvaveda to lend support to this view: 11,5,7 the brahmacārin or Vedic student is exalted to such a degree that he is declared to generate brahman, the world and Prajāpati, to become Indra and "an embryo in the womb of

<sup>9</sup> See the author's paper on the particle *ca*, *Vāk*, 5 (Poona, 1957), p. 1 ff.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. R. G. Bhandarkar,  *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and minor religious systems* (Strasbourg, 1913), p. 142 ff.; H. von Glasenapp, *Die Religionen Indiens* (Stuttgart, 1955), p. 174 ff.; L. Renou, in L. Renou-J. Filliozat, *L'Inde classique*, I (Paris, 1947), p. 624 ff.

<sup>11</sup> For the interpretation of *dhāmāni*, which is uncertain, see Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 141.

<sup>12</sup> That circles tending to consider Prajāpati as the origin and generator of the powers in the universe and the one god above all other gods identified Amṛta with the "Lord of creation" (Śat.Br. 6,3,1,17) need not detain us here.

immortality" (*garbho bhūtvāmṛtasya*): this must mean: "to have been regenerated as a being partaking of 'immortality'", that is to say: "he is to become a manifestation of 'immortality'". Elsewhere, AthV. 10,3,25 *amṛta-* is stated to be "in the gods". The opinion ventured by Grassmann: "(*amṛta-*) bisweilen als persönliches Wesen aufgefasst, als dessen Söhne die Götter dargestellt werden"<sup>13</sup> is in any case open to controversy. Nor can his translation of the term *amṛta-* in cases such as RV. 6,7,7 ("der Unsterblichkeitstrank") be regarded as completely convincing: Agni, "who has extended himself over all the worlds, the herdsman who cannot be deceived, the protector of immortality". As the main aspect of kingship is ability to guard and protect the realm and the subjects<sup>14</sup> the phrase *amṛtasya rakṣitā* does not seem to be essentially different from the above combinations with *pati-*. In the profound sūkta RV. 6,9 the same Agni Vaiśvānara who is the light of the world, is described as the *amṛtasya gopā* who knows the mysterious thread which connects the human world with the divine powers in heaven and the woof (of the universe); living in this world below he sees higher than others (st. 3). Agni is on the other hand more than other gods addressed as "the immortal one": RV. 1,44,5 "I will pray Thee, the immortal feeder of all (existence), O Agni, Thee, the immortal protector (*trātar-*)"; 3,14,7; 4,11,5 the immortal one who wards off enmity, the lord; from 6,7,4 it may be concluded that the gods, through Agni the immortal one, obtained immortality (cf. also 3,3,1): the light of the fire when breaking into flames means life even for the gods; 6,21,10 being immortal he has no equal; 3,1,18 in the house of mortal men the immortal one has sat down as a king (cf. also 4,2,1; 6,4,2; 7,4,4, etc.); 1,58,1 he is called *sahojā* as well as *amṛta-*, cf. 8,71,11.

In the Atharvaveda 5,30,14 (which is part of a text intended to lengthen a person's life) Agni is implored to associate the man on whose behalf the words are pronounced with strength and bodily existence, for he, Agni, "has knowledge of immortality". As knowledge is, in these times, power, this means that Agni has the disposal of *amṛta-*, i.e. continuance of life. Cf. AthV. 2,1,2 "the gandharva knowing of immortality". In 4,15,10 the wish is expressed that Agni shall win "rain, breath for (our) progeny, and *amṛta-* from heaven".<sup>15</sup> The gold that is born of fire, is

<sup>13</sup> H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda*, 94.

<sup>14</sup> See *Numen*, 3, p. 37 ff.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth mentioning that *amṛta-* is also supposed to have "strength" (*bala-*, AthV. 8,7,22) which may be drunk.



immortal (19,26,1). That the sun was regarded as extending, with his rays, immortal light appears from 12,1,15.<sup>16</sup>

In the Atharvaveda the following places of interest may be noticed. Among the charms against evil dreams or nightmares that occurring in 16,5, which agrees with 6,46,2, is characterized by calling the evil dream a son of various dangerous powers: "we know from which (whom) you are descended, O dream, you are the son of "seizure" or "fit" (*grāhi-*), *grāhi-* being a female power which (cf. 2,9) may be driven out; of *nirṛti-* the "goddess" of perdition; of "ill-success, diminution, want of power" (*abhūti-*) which does not appear to be conceived personally, and 7,100,1 is put on a par with evil dreams; of "disappearance, extermination" (*nirbhūti-*); of *parābhūti-* "humiliation, defeat".<sup>17</sup> If anywhere it is evident here that "son" means "representative" or "manifestation", evil dreams – which were earnestly dreaded – being widely regarded as indissolubly connected with the occurrences to which they are 'preludes': thus when one sees in a dream a black man with black teeth who kills him, one may be sure that this vision not only forebodes one's death, but is already a sign or symptom of the impending disaster. Generally speaking, there does not exist, in the opinion of the ancient Indians, a fundamental difference between an omen or portent and the occurrence of which it is an indication: if one succeeds in annihilating or expiating the former the occurrence itself will not take place.<sup>18</sup> It is in harmony with this conviction that dreams, in India and elsewhere – for instance in native America – are considered not only as predictive of sickness or other evil, but as directly responsible for it: if the ancient Egyptians wished to counteract the attempts of their enemies they destroyed not only their names, but also "all detrimental thought, all detrimental talk, all detrimental

<sup>16</sup> It may be recalled that *amṛta-* is conceived as a power-substance, which can, for instance, approach a person (AV. 19,43,7).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Ait. Ār. 3,2,4; see also H. Kohlbrugge, *Atharvaveda-pariśiṣṭa über Omina* (Thesis Utrecht, 1938), p. 13 ff. For nightmares etc. cf. W. H. Roscher, *Ephialtes*, *Abh. Sächs. Ges. Wiss., ph.-h. Kl.*, 20 (Leipzig, 1903); Van der Leeuw, *Religion*, p. 137 f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. also W. E. Peuckert, in H. Bächtold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, VIII (Berlin-Leipzig, 1936/37), 1734 ("man versucht eine Krähe zu verjagen, nicht um einem Kranken eine Aufregung zu ersparen, sondern um dem Vorzeichen entgegen zu arbeiten"); R. Thurnwald, *Des Menschegeistes Erwachen, Wachsen und Irren* (Berlin, 1951), p. 100 ff.; H. Webster, *Magie* (Stanford, Cal., 1948), p. 370; L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (Paris, 1928), p. 52 ff.; the same, *La mentalité primitive*<sup>14</sup> (Paris, 1947), p. 94 ff.; Van der Leeuw, *L'homme primitif et la religion* (Paris, 1940), p. 55 ff.; C. G. Diehl, *Instrument and purpose, Studies on rites and rituals in South India* (Lund, 1956), p. 216: "The destructive power (is) the tool used by the power that manifested itself in the omen."

dreams".<sup>19</sup> In the same atharvanic document the dream is called a son of the female relatives of the gods (*devajāmīnām putro 'sī*): another indication of the 'interchangeability' of powers such as "humiliation" and humanlike beings. The assertion that the man speaking knows the "place of origin" of the dream is of course to overawe the evil potency: knowing one's name or origin means having control over him.<sup>20</sup>

As is well-known, Varuṇa, the guardian of the Norm, afflicts with disease those who transgress it and neglect his ordinances (cf. e.g. RV. 1,122,9).<sup>21</sup> Hence the opinion that *takman-* "fever"<sup>22</sup> is Varuṇa's son (AthV. 1,25,3 "if heating or if scorching, or if you are a son of king Varuṇa..."). Curiously enough, Varuṇa's 'secret agents' or 'spies'<sup>23</sup> who are on the watch against sinful acts are also called his sons: 18,1,2.

That 'the gods' have sons is explicitly said in 11,8,10, a mystic text describing the constitution of man: "The ten gods – the physiological potencies, breath, mind, speech, etc. which combine to constitute a human being (st. 4; 26) – who existed of old, born from gods – having given the world to (their) sons – i.e. men –, in what world do they sit?" Here man is clearly viewed as being constituted by ten 'metaphysical powers', "gods", and the relation between him and the sources of his existence is conceived as a filial one. In one of the previous stanzas Indra is declared to have been born from Indra, Soma from Soma, Agni from Agni: this can only mean that there exists a dignity or power superior to a being clothed with it and continuing to exist even in default of a functionary. This is the common view in later times.<sup>24</sup> Here also the idea of "sonship" serves to elucidate a relation between an 'individual manifestation' and a 'metaphysical potency'. It may however be remembered that the terms 'god' or 'godhead' (*deva-* and *devatā*) also apply to such powers as sleep, destruction, old age, etc., which in st. 19 are stated to have entered the human body afterwards.

Of special interest is also AthV. 11,4,20 where "breath" (*prāṇa-*), which is extolled as the first principle and origin of life, is described not only as the lord of All (*sarvasyeśvaraḥ*), in whose control this All is, to which belong the phenomena in nature, but also as an "embryo" (*garbha-*) moving among the godheads (*devatā*) – that is to say: it is a principle

<sup>19</sup> H. Frankfort and others, *Before philosophy*, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. e.g. Henry, *o.c.*, p. 82 f.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. Filliozat, *La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne* (Paris, 1949), p. 76 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Filliozat, *o.c.*, p. 96 f.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 23 f.

<sup>24</sup> I cannot subscribe to the view formulated by P. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 14 (Leipzig, 1920), p. 270.



awaiting manifestation or destined to appear in this world –, which after having been is born again – this obviously means: appears repeatedly in the phenomenal world – and "having been entered with might (plural: *śacibhiḥ*) what is to be, what will be, (as) a father a son". The last line clearly refers to the views of conception discussed on the foregoing pages: the father reappears in the son and such a power as 'might' is, in generating a new being, a co-operating factor.

## X

Without embarking upon an investigation into the various connotations of the difficult term *ṛta*<sup>1</sup> we may now turn to some phrases containing that word and referring to Agni and some other gods. Agni, Soma, Viṣṇu are in the Ṛgveda called *garbha*- "child, offspring", *prajā* "descendant, child", *prathamajā* "first-born" of *ṛta*- "fundamental order, norm, truth, etc.": 6,48,5 Agni "Kind der Ordnung" (Geldner); 10,5,7 the same god is "first-born of *ṛta*-" a title given in the AV. (4,35,1; 12,1,61) to Prajāpati and (6,122,1) to Viśvakarman ("first-born of right" Whitney-Lanman); 9,68,5 Soma "Kind der Wahrheit" (Geldner); 1,156,3 Viṣṇu "Spross des Gesetzes oder der Zeit" (Geldner). These phrases help us better to understand the expression *ṛtajāta*- "born from *ṛta*-" which qualifies Agni RV. 1,36,19 – here he is called a light for men –; 144,7; 189,6 – calling the god a protector against everyone who wishes to blame or to do harm, espying injury–; 6,13,3.<sup>2</sup> Cf. also 1,141,1.

In RV. 10,5,7 Agni must share this position with the bull which is at the same time a cow: a primeval principle of creation. Cf. also RV. 1,164,37; Ath.V. 5,17,1. Now, RV. 6,73,1 where the title *prathamajā* alone is appositely given to Brhaspati, the lord of brahman, it is immediately followed by the adjective *ṛtāvan*- "being in accordance with *ṛta*-" (*yo adriḥhit prathamajā ṛtāvā brhaspatiḥ*), and the same combination occurs RV. 10,168,3 where Vāta, Wind, is *prathamajā ṛtāvā*. An attempt to read *ṛtasya* instead of *ṛtāvā*<sup>3</sup> would of course be inconsiderate. A plausible inference seems to be that both expressions could interchange

<sup>1</sup> For *ṛta*- see e.g. B. Geiger, *Amata spantas*, Sitz. Ber. Wien, 176, 7, p. 66 ff.; the same, *Wiener Zs. Kunde d. Morgenl.*, 41 (1934); L. H. Gray, *Arch. f. Relig.-wiss.*, 7, p. 353 ff.; V. M. Apte, *Ann. Bhandarkar Or. Res. Inst. Poona*, 23 (1942), p. 55 ff.; Lüders, *o.c.*, p. 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> I am not completely convinced by Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I, p. 23, according to whom this epithet is given "um der kultischen Wahrheit Willen".

<sup>3</sup> Thus Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 874.

because they did not essentially differ in meaning. If the "first-born of *ṛta*-" was, in modern terminology, the first embodiment of *ṛta*-, i.e. among phenomenal beings the prototype of those embodying *ṛta*- – compare RV. 1,32,3 and 4 where Vṛtra, the primeval snake, the 'dragon' par excellence, bears the name of "first-born of serpents" (*p. ahinām*) and 3,29,15 where a family in which the disposal of manifestations of *brahman* is hereditary is called "the first-born ones of *brahman*" (*p. brahmaṇas*) – "a first embodiment which is in accordance with *ṛta*-" can hardly be taken to express another sense. Significantly enough the adjective *ṛtāvan*- often serves to qualify Agni – cf. RV. 1,77,1; 2; 5 – who is also given the epithet *ṛtāvṛdh*-, a compound of disputed interpretation, usually translated by "increasing or fostering *ṛta*-" (cf. RV. 3,2,1) – although there is something to be said for Lüders<sup>4</sup> interpretation of the former member of the compound as an instrumental: "increasing by the *ṛta*-", which elsewhere describes Mitra and Varuṇa, Heaven and Earth, the gods in general, etc.

In the Atharvaveda 4,35,1 and 12,1,61 it is Prajāpati, the "Lord of creatures", who is called the first-born of *ṛta*-, 6,122,1 the title is given to Viśvakarman, the divine creative artist or architect.

The god of fire and some of his colleagues are however also known as *ṛtasya gopāḥ* "herdsman, protector of *ṛta*-", *ṛtasya patiḥ* "lord of *ṛta*-" and similar titles. See e.g. RV. 1,1,8 *rājantam adhvareṇāṇāṃ gopām ṛtasya* "dem Walter der Opferhandlungen, dem Hüter des rechten Brauches" (Geldner); 3,10,2 "Hüter der (Opfer-)ordnung" (Geldner); in both cases the god is stated or asked to grow or to radiate in his own house, i.e. in the house of the sacrificer. In 10,118,7 it reads: "with an unimpaired radiance do Thou, O Agni, burn the evil beings, shine being the protector (herdsman) of the right order" (*adābhyena śociṣāgne rakṣas tvam daha, gopā ṛtasya dīdhi*): it may be supposed that the epithet is used intentionally: maintenance of the fundamental order implies destruction of demoniac beings. In the rather obscure sūkta RV. 5,12, which contains a number of allusions to liars, deceivers and unfair competitors, Agni, to whom the author addresses himself, is called the "bull of *ṛta*-" ("Leitstier der Wahrheit" Geldner, or rather something like "chief, lord, champion of *ṛta*"); the word *ṛta*- is often repeated, Agni knows the *ṛta*- (st. 2) and is besought "to open the sources of *ṛta*-" and to attend to it or take notice of it. He observes the fundamental norm and order (st. 3) and is expected

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The god of fire and some of his colleagues are however also known as *ṛtasya gopāh* "herdsman, protector of *ṛta*-", *ṛtasya patiḥ* "lord of *ṛta*-" and similar titles. See e.g. R.V. 1,1,8 *rājantam adhvarāṇām gopām ṛtasya* "dem Walter der Opferhandlungen, dem Hüter des rechten Brauches" (Geldner); 3,10,2 "Hüter der (Opfer-)ordnung" (Geldner); in both cases the god is stated or asked to grow or to radiate in his own house, i.e. in the house of the sacrificer. In 10,118,7 it reads: "with an unimpaired radiance do Thou, O Agni, burn the evil beings, shine being the protector (herdsman) of the right order" (*adābhyena śociṣāgne rakṣas tvam dāha, gopā ṛtasya dīdhi*): it may be supposed that the epithet is used intentionally: maintenance of the fundamental order implies destruction of demoniac beings. In the rather obscure sūkta R.V. 5,12, which contains a number of allusions to liars, deceivers and unfair competitors, Agni, to whom the author addresses himself, is called the "bull of *ṛta*-" ("Leitstier der Wahrheit" Geldner, or rather something like "chief, lord, champion of *ṛta*-"); the word *ṛta*- is often repeated, Agni knows the *ṛta*- (st. 2) and is besought "to open the sources of *ṛta*-" and to attend to it or take notice of it. He observes the fundamental norm and order (st. 3) and is expected

<sup>4</sup> Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I, p. 22 f. "durch die Wahrheit wachsend". The word does certainly not mean "an Recht..., Frommigkeit sich freuend" (Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 287).



to fetter the evil-doer. So much is clear that the burning and radiating god who is a destroyer of evil and darkness *par excellence* is considered a protector of the right order which is infringed by cheats and criminals. Cf. also 6,49,15. Similar observations may often be made in connection with the use of the same phrases when applied to other gods: 9,73,8 Soma, the protector of *ṛta*-, strong of mind, cannot be deceived; surveying all creatures he punishes the wicked; the god addressed is Varuṇa 10,8,5; 7,40,4 (*netā* . . . *ṛtasya*). Cf. also 6,51,3 and 2,23,17: Brahmanaspati is the one who gives heed to (man's) obligations, demanding their fulfilment, the destroyer of injury, proving himself a supporter of the great *ṛta*- (*maha ṛtasya dhartari*<sup>5</sup>). Cf. also 1,23,5.

Some words may also be said on the relation between Aditi and her sons, the Ādityas. Aditi,<sup>6</sup> though devoid of definite physical features, is the great mother: being identified with the earth or even with the universe, she may be said to represent also width, broadness, deliverance and freedom – the last term being in all probability the best translation of her name.<sup>7</sup> That means that she is a power opposed to all limitation, narrowness – she delivers from *amhas*-, guilt-, in short to all lack of freedom and hindrance to earthly life. Her sons are the Ādityas, who, when invoked as a group, represent celestial light, the chief source of life, oppose all powers of darkness and protect man from every evil. Even a superficial perusal of the relevant passages in the R̥gveda shows that the sons are not foreign to the nature of their mother. Like the Ādityas (cf. 2,27; 8,18,22; 8,67), Aditi bestows such boons as light, wealth, safety and other benefits to those who worship her (4,25,3; 7,82,10; 7,40,2); like her sons (2,27,4; 8,47,1) she is believed to protect them (1,136,3; 8,18,6; 7); like these (2,29,1; 8,47,7), she delivers from sin and guilt (2,27,14; 7,93,7), and also from *amhas* or *amhati*- (7,40,4 etc.; cf. 8,67,2; 7; 21). She is, like her sons Mitra and Varuṇa, bright and luminous, and a supporter of creatures (1,136,3). How closely sons and mother are associated may not only appear from the insertion of stanzas specially addressed to her in hymns devoted to the Ādityas (2,27,7; 4,25,3; 8,18,4; 6; 7; 8,47,9; 8,67,10), but also from such a text as 7,51,1 where the latter are implored "to place the offering in 'guiltlessness' (i.e. 'purity': *anāgāstve*) and freedom (*adititve*)". The word *adititva*- means the condition of being *aditi*-. As becomes the "sons of freedom" they assist man in

<sup>5</sup> For this form, the grammatical character of which is questionable, see Wackernagel-Debrunner, *o.c.*, III, p. 205 (§ 107 c).

<sup>6</sup> See Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 120 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See *Aspects of early Vṛṣṇism* (Utrecht, 1954), p. 117, n. 50.

his struggle for existence and in his resistance to oppression, they destroy evil influences and promote welfare and happiness, they extend their activity "deeply and widely" (2,27,3), protecting the whole world (2,27,4) and especially that important and fundamental principle, the *ṛta*- (5,63,1; 2,27,4) of which their mother is said to be the mistress (AV. 7,6,2 = VS. 21,5), a quality which is RV. 1,23,5 attributed to her sons Mitra and Varuṇa. The light to be granted by the sons is Aditi's (7,82,10). Mitra and Varuṇa, – called lords of light 1,23,5 – are stated to assist her every day, having gained "luminous dominion". The Ādityas are called *ṛtāvan*- "associated with *ṛta*-" , their mother is qualified by the same epithet in its feminine form (8,25,3). She often acts in co-operation with one, or with some, of her sons: with Aryaman: 7,93,7; with Mitra and Varuṇa: 1,136,3; 2,27,14; with the Ādityas in general: 1,107,2; 7,51,2; 8,18,4; 67,14; 18, etc. etc.

We may go further: Aditi is explicitly declared to be identical with all the gods in general and with the five races of men, i.e. mankind; she is what has been born and what is to be born (RV. 1,89,10; AV. 7,6,1, etc.). She, the luminous one, sustains the creatures (*dhārayatkṣiti*:- RV. 1,136, 3): her sons, collectively and especially the prominent Mitra and Varuṇa, are kings (2,27,1; 3; 12; 6,51,4; 8,101,5 etc.), that is to say: they are protectors of men and intermediaries between the celestial powers and the inhabitants of the earth, representatives of those powers on which depend all life and prosperity;<sup>8</sup> RV. 8,67,13 they are styled the chiefs of the races of men. In the AV. 12,3,11 Aditi is, on the other hand, compared to an active herdsman, RV. 7,66,6 the royal dignity is ascribed to the Ādityas and Aditi conjointly (cf. 6,51,4).

There seems therefore to be room for the conclusion that in this case also "sonship" implies representation of the idea or ideas inherent in the nature of the parent. What has been the idea expressed by Aditi has been a matter of much discussion among scholars, who, as a rule under the influence of the trends in the mode of thought of their epoch, not rarely emphasized only one aspect of her character. Whereas Pischel<sup>9</sup> considered her to be the earth – a point of view in favour of which many brāhmaṇa texts could be adduced –, Hillebrandt,<sup>10</sup> following one of the interpretations proposed by Roth,<sup>11</sup> held that she was the eternal principle underlying the imperishable celestial light: as has already been noticed there

<sup>8</sup> See "Ancient Indian Kingship", *Numen*, 3, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> R. Pischel, *Vedische Studien* (Stuttgart, 1897), II, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, III, p. 408 ff.; <sup>11</sup> II (Breslau, 1929), p. 95 ff.

<sup>11</sup> R. Roth, *ZDMG*, 6, p. 68 ff.



are texts in which she is closely associated with light. Max Müller<sup>12</sup> expressed the view that she denotes the boundless sky as the expression of visible infinity: width or broadness are indeed one of her main characteristics. Oldenberg<sup>13</sup> – though emphasizing her being regarded as a cow – took the view that she represents freedom from bondage – and he, too, is not in want of evidence. He was combatted by Kuiper<sup>14</sup> for whom the goddess is simply the 'Great Mother'. Basing ourselves on the Ṛgveda we can hardly be prevented from concluding that Aditi is, as a rule in co-operation with some of her sons, or even with all of them, expected to extend protection to human beings (cf. e.g. 7,60), to deliver them from distress, fear, pollution, impurity, guilt, enmity, or by whatever name the various aspects of evil are indicated (cf. e.g. also ṚV. 1,94,15; 10,100), to assist them, to give them happiness and prosperity. Although it would serve no useful purpose to go over all the relevant passages, part of which have already been mentioned, some of them may for a moment arrest our attention. ṚV. 1,185,3 Aditi's gift is invoked, which must mean the light of life – cf. 7,82,10; 10,185,3<sup>15</sup> –; it is described as free from 'sin' (*enas*),<sup>16</sup> not to be obstructed (*anarva*-), bright (like the sun), opposite to death (*avadha*- "vom Tode befreiend" Geldner): cf. 10,185 "great and 'irresistible' is the assistance rendered by Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman"; "the enemy has no hold over those to whom Aditi's sons give their eternal light to live". In ṚV. 10,100, which is addressed to the gods in general – Indra, Vāyu, Savitar, Soma, Agni and Bṛhaspati being invoked by their names –, it is – according to Geldner's<sup>17</sup> translation – Aditi who is in a refrain invoked for *sarvatāti*-, that is to say for "completeness" or rather "a safe and sound condition".<sup>18</sup> It seems, however, possible to take this line (*ā sarvatātim aditiṃ vṛṇīmahe*) as containing an explanation or qualification of *sarvatāti*:- "we entreat a safe and sound condition, *aditi*- ("freedom", "free scope" or something to that effect)": the wish: may we be, or remain, uninjured, is – if this explication happens to be correct – extended by the prayer for "free

<sup>12</sup> Max Müller, *Sacred Books of the East*, 22, p. 241 ff.

<sup>13</sup> H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1923), p. 202 ff.

<sup>14</sup> F. B. J. Kuiper, *De goddelijke moeder in de Voor-Indische religie* (Groningen, 1939). See further also H. S. Vodskov, *Sjæledyrkelse og Naturdyrkelse* (Copenhagen, 1897), p. 321 ff.

<sup>15</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 265.

<sup>16</sup> See Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, esp. p. 136 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, III, p. 313.

<sup>18</sup> I refer to "Reflections on *sarva*- in Vedic texts", in *Indian Linguistics*, 16 (Chatterji Jubilee volume) (Madras, 1953), p. 53 ff., esp. p. 57.

scope, or room to live in (Lebensraum) unimpeded by distress, indigence, diseases, enemies, pollution by guilt and sins, and other manifestations of evil".

We might compare here the prayer on behalf of someone who is seriously ill, RV. 1,24, which after asking (st. 1) which god might restore the person speaking (i.e. the man who is ill) to the great *aditi-*, expects Agni to be the god who by performing that deed will enable the patient to see his parents (st. 2). In contradistinction to Geldner<sup>19</sup> I feel inclined to believe that the great *aditi-* to whom the patient should be given back is the normal, or at least ideal, unhampered condition of health. As already has been stated in the beginning of this treatise Agni was often invoked to ward off evil, to dispel demons, to preserve his worshippers from calamities: he is able to avert Varuṇa's wrath (RV. 4,1,4), and the prayers for health and long life in the Atharvaveda place these supreme goods in the special charge of this god.<sup>20</sup>

In the last line of this śūkta the term *aditi-* recurs once more in a stanza which returns frequently in various Vedic scriptures: *ud uttamaṃ varuṇa pāśam asmad avādhamam vi madhyamaṃ śrathāya | athā vayam āditya vrate tavānāgasō aditaye syāma*, an English translation of which may be something like this: "Loosen (up) the uppermost fetter from us, O Varuṇa, (down) the lowest, (off) the midmost; may we then, O Āditya, in thy manner of life (according to the practice based on thine ordinances), belong, without pollution, to Aditi".<sup>21</sup> It would appear to me that in interpreting this stanza scholars have laid too much stress on the moral side of the term for "sin", *āgas*. In this connection the bonds from which the person praying wants to be delivered certainly consist of disease. But the same stanza may do duty under other circumstances. Whereas AV. 7,83,3 has it used in a rite for curing a man of dropsy – the disease with which Varuṇa often seizes his victims – (see Kauś.Sū. 32,14), the same corpus 18,4,69 prescribes it in the ceremony of the first day after cremation (Kauś. 82,8); according to the commentary all the brahmans

<sup>19</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 24: "Die Strophe lässt offen, ob es sich um wirkliche Gefangenschaft oder um Schuld und Krankheit handelt".

<sup>20</sup> See M. Bloomfield, *The Atharva-veda and the Gopatha-brāhmaṇa* (Strasburg, 1899), p. 64.

<sup>21</sup> This translation is different from that given by Geldner (*o.c.*, I, p. 26): "dann wollen wir, Sohn der Aditi, in deinem Dienste vor Aditi sündlos sein", Whitney-Lanman (*Atharvaveda Saṃhitā*, p. 891): "then may we in thy sphere, O Āditya, be guiltless unto Aditi", Rodhe (*o.c.*, p. 37): "then may we be sinless to Aditi in thy law, O Āditya", "und möchten wir, o Āditya, in deiner Observanz, der Aditi gegenüber schuldlos sein" (W. Caland, *Das Śrautasūtra des Āpastamba*, I, Göttingen-Leipzig, p. 91) and other authors.



who attended the ceremony should, immediately after, take a bath whilst reciting this stanza. It follows that here the pollution (*āgas*) referred to in this stanza cannot consist in moral guilt or illness; it is the contamination by death. This more general meaning of the term *āgas* is in harmony with the rather wide application of the line in the ritual texts: in Taitt.S. 5,2,1,3 it is prescribed in order to avert the evil consequences of taking the fire-pan: by this verse the man who has taken it frees himself from Varuṇa's noose.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the chapter dealing with *dīkṣās* or "observances" to be undertaken before the study of the ritual in the Mānavagṛhyasūtra (1,23,27) the same stanza is quoted; although it obviously is a later addition<sup>23</sup> it is not devoid of sense. It accompanies the act of unloosening the girdle.<sup>24</sup> The girdle which is a sign of initiation (see e.g. Śat.Br. 6,2,2,39), was a subject for speculation among the ancient ritualists: it was to discriminate between the pure and impure parts of the body (Taitt.S. 6,1,3,4; Gop.B. 2,2,17); it might serve as a means of preventing useful power from dissipating (AV. 6,133,5) or as a magical device for impeding the progress of an enemy (ibid. st. 3). Here the signification seems to be that the person speaking who during the state of his consecration was loaded with great power (cf. also AV. 6,133,4), wishes to safeguard himself against the evil consequences not only of faults committed, but also of his return to a state of 'profanity'. The ambivalent character of the powers and beings concerned with binding is obvious: they were also conceived to be able to release: AV. 6,133,1 "the god who bound on this girdle, who fastened it... he will attempt to gain the further shore (i.e. the end of difficulties) and he will release us".<sup>25</sup>

It may be remembered that in loosing the scarf (*veṣṭa-*) of the bride (cf. Kauś. 75,23) the stanza AV. 14,1,19 is recited: "I release you from Varuṇa's fetter, with which the very propitious Savitar bound you." These words (= RV. 10,85,24) 'symbolize' the loosening or dissociation of the girl from her parents and paternal residence (cf. Āśv. GS. 1,7,16 f.). The condition of being bound to these, which means a lack of freedom,

<sup>22</sup> Cf. also Taitt. S. 1,5,11,3; 4,2,1,3 (see A. B. Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, Harvard, 1914, p. 82; 308).

<sup>23</sup> See M. J. Dresden, *Mānavagṛhyasūtra* (thesis Utrecht, 1941), p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> The reader may for the sake of brevity be referred to W. Caland-V. Henry, *L'Agnisoma*, I (Paris, 1906), p. 18; Oldenberg, *o.c.*, p. 465, n. 2, and the same, *ZDMG*, 62, p. 594.

<sup>25</sup> The subjunctives express the idea of 'mental existence' or a mental image on the part of the speaker which in his opinion is capable of realization or even awaits realization: see *The character of the Indo-European moods* (Wiesbaden, 1956), p. 68 ff.

is obviously indicated by the term "(bound by) Varuṇa's fetters".

In the ritual of the *ukhya- agni-* (or, Agni in the caldron) as described in the brāhmaṇas the sling of the netting on which the fire-pan was to be placed, and the sling of the gold plate which had to be worn are untied (see Śat.Br. 6,7,3,8), "for the sling belongs to Varuṇa; by so doing one frees oneself from Varuṇa's noose"; the stanza accompanying this act is the one under discussion, and after observing that Aditi is the earth the author of the brāhmaṇa explains the sense of the formula as follows: *anāgasas tubhyaṃ cāsyai ca syāmeti etat* "may we be free from pollution for thee and her" or rather, "free from pollution may we belong to thee and her".<sup>26</sup> If Eggeling was not far wrong in rendering *aditi-* by "safety", the purport of the formula may, in this connection, have been this: may we be freed from pollution and restored to the ideal safe and sound condition, unhampered and secure from Varuṇa's wrath. For Varuṇa is a wrathful lord. He is a king, the lord of all that exists (RV. 7,87,6), a self-dependent ruler, a universal monarch, but he is, on the other hand, also the great guardian of the world and upholder of order, whether it be physical or moral;<sup>27</sup> like kings in general he ought to uphold dharma and to punish the wicked.<sup>28</sup> Being omniscient – a quality of the god which is extended to the whole universe, although its proper object is the actions of man –, he is not to be deceived (cf. RV. 1,24,13) and behind this omniscience lies punitive sanction against wrongful actions (cf. RV. 2,28,7). But he who administers justice is able to clear his justiciables from guilt: cf. e.g. AV. 19,44,8 "man speaks much untruth, O king Varuṇa; do thou free us from that *aṇhas* (distress in consequence of misconduct)". The very punishment purifies, according to the Indian conviction, the man of sinful behaviour (cf. e.g. Manu 8,318).<sup>29</sup> This character of atonement, satisfaction, or punishment is also apparent from many terms denoting the annihilation of guilt or 'sin': *bheṣaja-* literally "remedy, medicine" ('sin' being put on a par with disease), *śānti*.<sup>30</sup> "appeasement" (of evil influences), *niṣkraya-* "redemption,

<sup>26</sup> Compare the translation proposed by J. Eggeling, *The Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, III (SBE, 41) (Oxford, 1894), p. 280.

<sup>27</sup> As has been pointed out elsewhere (see "Anc. Ind. kingship", *Numen*, 3, esp. p. 52 ff.) this function is generally supposed to belong to a great king.

<sup>28</sup> For Varuṇa's kingship see also H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I (Göttingen, 1951), p. 28 ff.; R. Pettazzoni, *The All-knowing God* (London, 1956), p. 118 ff.; M. Eliade, *Images et symboles* (Paris, 1952), p. 124 ff.

<sup>29</sup> See also P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmadāstra*, III (Poona, 1946), p. 390; and especially W. Gampert, *Die Sühnezeeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur* (Prague, 1939).

<sup>30</sup> See D. J. Hoens, *Śānti* (thesis Utrecht, 1951).



ransom" (the sinner should be redeemed from the demons of illness), *śodhana*- "cleaning, purification" (sinning causes defilement), and *prāyaścitta*- "Beabsichtigung des Fortgehens, d.h. Sorge für das Verschwinden der in der Sünde, dem Unfall, dem Unheil gesehenen und eventuell personifiziert gedachten schädlichen Substanz".<sup>31</sup> The expression used in the Bār.U. 5,7,1 for getting rid of evil admits of the interpretation: "unlooses from evil": *vidyati pāpmanah*.<sup>32</sup>

It may be reasonably inferred that Varuṇa's special characteristic, his fettering and ensnaring activity – in the Ṛgveda the term "fetter" (*pāśa*-) is almost exclusively distinctive of this god – cannot be dissociated from what must be considered to have been the etymological meaning of the name of his 'mother': as already intimated this word deriving from *dā-dyati* "to bind" probably meant: "being loose, freedom (of bondage), free scope, freedom of movement and action, an unhampered condition, etc."<sup>33</sup> The solution of this at first sight curious association: the Fetterer, son of Freedom, must be sought in the ambivalent character of those gods who punish and give rise to evil; they are also believed to rescue

<sup>31</sup> Gampert, *o.c.*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. also *Petr. Dict.*, III, 578, s.v. *vi-dā*.

<sup>33</sup> See especially Oldenberg, *o.c.*, p. 202 f. For other explications see e.g. Macdonell, *o.c.*, p. 123. The opinion expressed by Kuiper, *o.c.*, p. 12 f., that the meaning of the name is a matter of indifference with regard to an understanding of the character of the goddess is hardly tenable. It is of course a very objectionable method to design a picture of a god's essence and nature on the basis of an uncertain etymological explication of his name – as a case in point the famous identification *Ὀρέωνος*: *Varuṇa*- might be recalled (see Rodhe, *o.c.*, p. 59 f.) – the name is, on the other hand, according to a wide-spread 'pre-scientific' belief part of the bearer's personality to such a degree that it can be felt by the 'primitive' to be pregnant with the full significance of the person denoted – the name is reflected experienced will and power, "no mere specification, but rather an actuality expressed in a word" (Van der Leeuw, *Religion*, p. 147) –: for the prehistoric Indian who had introduced the name *Aditi* as well as for those who continued understanding its original sense this name also was a significant reality; and when they no longer understood it and connected it for instance with the verb for giving (*dā*-: Śat.Br. 7,4,2,7) or with that for eating (*ad*-: Bār.U. 1,2,5) Vedic ritualists and 'philosophers' in deriving knowledge about the nature of the goddess from her name remained deeply convinced of correspondence between the name and its bearer. In studying the character of Vedic gods their names should therefore, as far as possible, that is: as far as prudence permits, not be neglected. – With regard to Varuṇa's name (see the survey given by Rodhe, *o.c.*, p. 58 ff.) the reader might be referred to Eliade, *o.c.*, p. 125; J. Wackernagel-A. Debrunner, *Altind. Grammatik*, II, 2 (Göttingen, 1954), p. 485. The etymology proposed by H. Petersson (*Studier tillegnade E. Tegnér* (Lund, 1918), p. 230 ff. (: A.Ind. *varatrā* "strap, throng, strip of leather" etc.)) is in any case decidedly to be preferred to the loanword theories of P. Kretschmer (*Wiener Zs. Kunde Morg.*, 33, p. 1 ff.) and J. Przyluski (*J. R. As. Soc.*, 1931, p. 613 ff.), and less improbable than the often repeated derivation from *vr*- "to cover".

their worshippers, to save them, and to deliver them from evil.<sup>34</sup>

An interesting passage is also RV. 7,88,7: the poet expresses the intention to worship Varuṇa – who is implored to free those on whose behalf he speaks from his fetters –, gaining assistance from Aditi's lap, inhabiting secure places of residence and praying for the blessings of the gods.

If the above details are kept in mind it seems possible better to understand the purport of stanzas such as RV. 7,87,7 "may we be free from āgas ("sin") with regard to Varuṇa, whom we expect to be gracious even to those who have committed āgas, and may we follow the observances (line of conduct) of Aditi" or 8,67,14 "O Ādityas, release us who are fettered like a thief from the mouth of the wolves", or 18 where the goddess is invoked in a line describing those praying as prisoners.

In illustration of the use of the term "fetter" and the idea of binding we might recall to memory the Śunaḥśepa episode (Ait.B. 7,13 ff.; Śāṅkh.ŚS. 15,17 ff.): at each verse recited by the victim one of his bonds was loosened and the abdomen of king Aikṣvāka – which was swollen up because Varuṇa was angry with him – became smaller. Two "blessed stars" (*subhage tārake*) which were expected to unfasten (*vi-muc-*) the fetters of the disease called *kṣetriya-* (AV. 3,7,4) were called the "looseners" (*vicṛt-* from *vi-ṛt-* "to loosen, detach, open, set free"); compare also the nearly identical stanza AV. 2,8,1.

Deliverance from the bonds of sins is also a European thought. In ancient England Cynewulf<sup>35</sup> wrote that he had been fettered by sins, but God "unbound my body". Still in the Book of Common Prayer<sup>36</sup> it reads: "O Lord, we beseech Thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bonds of those sins which by our frailty we have committed."

## XI

A great variety of places seem further to show that the idea expressed by the term *Aditi-* is opposed to obstructions and impediments and leads to well-being and happiness. Hers is indestructible light, which should be preserved for the benefit of mankind (RV. 7,82,10; 1,136,3; cf. 4,25,3); Uṣas (Dawn), who is also called the mother of the gods is her "face",

<sup>34</sup> See the author's *De Indische godsdiensten* (Den Haag, 1954), p. 70 f.

<sup>35</sup> Cynewulf, El. 1244 ff., cited by Onians, *o.c.*, p. 440.

<sup>36</sup> Coll. for the 24th Sunday after Trinity.



"front" or "appearance" (1,113,19); the beneficent Soma is the broad path of Aditi for those who walk in the way of order and truth (9,74,3); she yields 'milk' (i.e. soma), broad and refreshing (this may be the sense of 9,96,15); 9,69,3 the soma plant is her granddaughter (cf. also 10,11,1). She is invoked for wealth (5,69,3). It has already been pointed out that Aditi's lap, i.e. the place of universal creation – because "on her this universe of life has settled" (VS. 9,5) – is a source of divine protection: there Soma is prepared (RV. 9,26,1; 71,5; 74,5), i.e. the tub in which this process takes place is mystically identified with it. Dakṣa, the male original god, has been born from it (cf. 10,5,7). Her children, the Ādityas, protect against malice and wickedness (RV. 8,47,1; cf. 6,62,8), drive away evil (8,47,2; cf. 2,29,1), give a place to dwell in and livelihood (8,47,4) and happiness (8,83,5). Her son Varuṇa, the legitimate lord, has triplicated the broadness of the earth (4,42,4), i.e. increased man's 'Lebensraum' enormously; Bhaga, his brother, the dispenser of fortune and happiness "is victorious in the morning" (7,41,2); Mitra and Varuṇa punish transgressions of the established order (7,60,5), the latter regulated the course of the waters, a deed of great importance for mankind (2,28,4); all her sons are able to keep off enmity (8,18,5).

As thus represented in her offspring the goddess herself is also a manifestation of many good powers. She is closely associated with Dyaus, the bright sky (5,59,8; cf. 10,63,3). She is expected to give, together with her children, a long lifetime (RV. 1,94,16), happiness (5,51,11; 7,35,9), well-being (2,29,3; 5,51,14; 6,51,11), gifts (5,49,3), to answer prayers (3,54,20; 5,46,6), to pardon the sinner (2,27,14). She is not rarely called a mother (2,27,7; 3,4,11; 5,42,2). Especially frequent are those passages in which she is implored for protection (see e.g. also 4,54,6; 55,1; 6,75,12; 17; 10,66,2; 3) or for an escape from distress (8,25,10; 10,36,3; 39,11), or she is asked to prevent a person from being defeated or from suffering a loss (8,67,10 ff.). Delivering man from "sin" (*āgas*, see e.g. 1,162,22), she is besought to make him free (8,47,9) and to protect him (ibid.; 6,51,5; 7,62,4; cf. 10,63,10). She is mentioned together with the Ādityas in a stanza imploring the gods for a good place to live in (6,51,4). Like Mitra and Varuṇa she is a ruler and guardian of the unbroken, pure or inviolable right order and correct conduct (7,66,6 *adabdhasya vratasya*), of the fundamental order and correctness denoted by the term *ṛta-: ṛtasya gopa-*. These facts and considerations may perhaps amount to a demonstration of what may be presupposed in view of the ancient Indian conception of freedom from distress in general, i.e. that Aditi represents that freedom which is safety. If this is true, the

explanation of RV. 7,52,1 is obvious: *ādityāso aditayaḥ syāma* "we would like to be Ādityas, aditis, i.e. sons of freedom-and-safety, representatives of freedom-and-safety". These words are followed by the statement: "(we would like to have) a stronghold among gods and men; obtaining this, O Mitra and Varuṇa, we would like to gain (to have the upper hand)". Cf. also 7,51,1.

Not only human beings, but also other deities may become 'aditis'. According to RV. 8,48,2 the soma, after having entered the person who drinks it (him) should become *aditi-*, warding off the anger of the divine beings, i.e. delivering that man from evil. Agni is several times identified with her: RV. 2,1,11 "Thou, O god Agni, art Aditi for the worshipper". This place may induce us to disagree with Geldner<sup>1</sup> in the interpretation of RV. 1,94,15 – the *sūkta* is addressed to Agni – *yasmai tvam . . . dadāṣo 'nāgāstvam adite sarvatātā* "to whom Thou givest freedom from *āgas*, O Aditi (i.e. representative of freedom and safeness), together with an uninjured condition . . ." (not "... (wie) Aditi Schuldlosigkeit in vollem Masze"). Cf. also 4,1,20; 7,9,3.

Some other Vedic passages may be quoted in addition to the above. Aditi is a source of various blessings and useful powers: AV. 3,22,1; 71; 18,4,30; implored for protection AV. 6,3,1; 4,1; 120,2; 7,6,2; 3; 17,3; 18,3,27. She is the mistress of *ṛta* : 7,6,2; 2,28,4 the wish is expressed that a man may live in Aditi's lap for a hundred years: this no doubt means in a sound and safe condition; cf. 13,1,38, which runs as follows: *yaśāḥ pṛthivyā adityā upasthe* "glorious in the lap of the earth, of Aditi". The goddess being identified with the earth,<sup>2</sup> her lap is associated with the navel of the earth, the very place where the blessings of heaven reach the human world (ŚāBr. 6,14): as is well known a 'mother-goddess', the mother of the created world, is not rarely connected with this centre of the earth.<sup>3</sup> Combining the characteristics of the earth and those of freedom and safety Aditi was declared to be of wide shelter (VājS. 10,9); cf. e.g. ŚāBr. 5,3,5,37; 6,5,4,2.

Owing, not so much to the paucity of our sources, but to their uniformity, and to the very character of the sphere of thought to which these concepts belong it is very difficult to describe in exact terms what Vedic man understood by *āgas*. So much is certain that the usual translations — "Sünde; Unrecht" (Grassmann); "transgression, offence,

<sup>1</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> This identification is often found in the *brāhmaṇas*.

<sup>3</sup> U. Holmberg, *Der Baum des Lebens*, *Ann. Acad. Sc. Fenn.*, B 16, 3 (Helsinki, 1922 f.), p. 95; Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 84 ff.



injury, sin, fault" (Monier Williams), "Vergehen" (Geldner), etc. – give no complete picture of the idea conveyed by this term. For Rodhe<sup>4</sup> it is a synonym of the equally difficult word *enas*, translatable by "sin". It is true that it is often associated with the verb *karoti* "to do or make" – cf. e.g. RV. 1,179,5 *yat sīm āgaś cakṛma* "if ever we have done *āgas*" –, but even these simple phrases may produce difficulties in our way. Anyhow *āgas* is in similar contexts the product of human action, and man expects divine beings to be willing and able to annihilate the effects of that action: see for instance RV. 1,179,5, where the person speaking asks forgiveness. It is not always clear to the prejudice of whom the harm called *āgas* is done: cf. e.g. RV. 10,137,1. From other passages it, however, appears that a considerable variety of beings may belong to those who can be offended: gods, a friend, an earthly authority (1,185,8; 2,27,14; AV. 12,4,50).

Among the gods mentioned in this connection are Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa (RV. 2,27,14; cf. 7,66,4), Varuṇa alone (7,88,6), the Ādityas in general (RV. 2,29,1); Agni (RV. 4,12,4); the Maruts (RV. 7,57,4); the Pitaras (RV. 10,15,6); the Sun (AV. 13,3,1).

There is no doubt that the person speaking may himself be offended by others so as to be struck by, or loaded with, *āgas*: RV. 5,3,7 *yo na āgo abhy eno bharāty adhīd agham aghaśaṃse dadhāta* "who intends to throw *āgas* and *enas* upon us, place (O gods) the *agha*- (another word for "evil") upon that wicked one"; the meaning must be: let the harm return to the doer.

As already stated, *āgas* can be forgiven (cf. also RV. 2,27,14; 7,93,7). It may however also be removed or 'loosened' by a god (cf. RV. 2,29,1 by the Ādityas; 5,85,7 by Varuṇa) or by an incantation (AV. 2,10,1).

An interesting place is RV. 10,137,1 where the gods are stated to restore life to the man who has 'sinned' or, rather, performed *āgas*; here *āgas* means, or leads to, death.<sup>5</sup>

Many instances of the adjective *anāgas*- are of some help in solving the problem. From RV. 5,83,2 it appears that an *anāgas*-, i.e. pure or taintless, man may be the opposite of an evil-doer. In RV. 8,67,7 it is co-ordinated with freedom from *enas* and deliverance (lit. "broadness": *uru*-) from *aṃhas* "distress" – it is interesting to notice that AV. 7,118,1

<sup>4</sup> Rodhe, *o.c.*, p. 139. For Gr. ἄγος which is usually connected with *āgas* now see P. Chantraine et O. Masson, in *Sprachgeschichte und Wortbedeutung. Festschrift A. Debrunner* (Bern, 1954), p. 85 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Sāyaṇa expresses the interesting view that these words are to mean: protect me against the *āgas* which I have done, etc.

Varuṇa is invoked "to make room wider than wide" (*uror varīyah*) –; 10,37,7 with health and a long life in the light of the sun; 10,63,4 the *anāgasas* are said to gain heaven and well-being; 10,35,3 the condition of being *āgas*-less leads to "prosperity or good luck" (*suvita*-). The idea of *āgas* is on the other hand associated with *kṣetriya*- ("inherited disease"), *nirṛti*- ("perdition"), imprecation of female relatives, hatred (AV. 2,10,1).

The nature of the 'sin' or rather "taint" or "pollution" may be illustrated by passages such as RV. 8,47,18 which, occurring at the end of a pericope dealing with the exorcization of an evil dream – an occurrence which, as is well known, was conceived as closely allied, or confluent with moral or ritual impurity<sup>6</sup> – runs as follows: "Today we have been successful and gained the victory and we have shaken off the *āgas* (have become *anāgas*-); O Uṣas (Dawn) the evil dreams... must disappear by (with) thy light". It seems clear that a man becomes, in the opinion of the poet, impure by having evil dreams; that is to say, not only as Geldner<sup>7</sup> would have us believe, "sündhafte Träume", but any inauspicious dream (*duṣvapnyam*). The same line recurs RV. 10,164,5 followed by the expression of the wish that an evil day-dream and nefarious intentions should fall upon "the person who hates us and whom we hate". A similar transfer of 'sin' is also described by the poet of RV. 10,36,9: those speaking pray for life and freedom from *āgas*, that the haters of *brahman* should burden themselves with *enas* taking it away (from the others).

An interesting passage which was misunderstood by Grassmann, Roth<sup>8</sup> and others – who took *anāgā(s)* to mean "nicht herbeikommend" – is RV. 10,165,2; AV. 6,27,2: being addressed to birds of ill omen it expresses the wish that the dove which happens to come into the speaker's house may be propitious (and not a messenger of perdition: st. 1), and the large ominous bird (vulture, hawk, etc.) be *anāgas*-, i.e. "harmless", not bearing and spreading *āgas*: "let the winged missile avoid us". It does not appear from the context whether this *āgas* is the result of someone's making. In the above-mentioned passage AV. 2,10,1 where *āgas* is associated with hatred, imprecation, inherited disease etc., it may also be an adventitious evil, not 'sin' produced by the victim himself: the text is used (Kauś. 26,1; 27,7) in healing ceremonies, or (according to the commentary) against the disease *kṣetriya*- alone. Another formula, AV. 19,44,3, employed with an ointment amulet to counteract the disastrous

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Bloomfield, *Atharvaveda*, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, p. 368.

<sup>8</sup> *Petr. Dict.*, I, 182.



consequences of being seized by *nirṛti*-<sup>9</sup> expresses the wish to be unperishing, of chariot-swiftness and free from *āgas*. AV. 10,1,18 it is likewise difficult to decide whether this *āgas* is due to external influences: being used in a ceremony against witchcraft (Kauś. 39,7) – which "they have buried" in various places or "practised against you in the fire" – the stanza expressly states that the victim is "simple and innocent (*anāgas*-)": does this mean that the simple man had done no harm to those perpetrating the criminal witchcraft, or more generally that his state of being free from any *āgas* should safeguard him against their attacks? The latter idea seems to be implied in AV. 9,5,2 where a goat which, as a sacrificial animal, is to cross the great darkness unto the world of the virtuous or well-fated (*sukṛt*-) is demanded to take hold of "him who hates us", a request followed by the intimation that the heroes (sons) of the sacrificer himself are *anāgas*:- this must, in all probability, mean that they are or ought to be pure and consequently immune. A similar place is AV. 10,1,7 (witchcraft is addressed): "do not seek us who are innocent" (cf. RV. Kh. 4,5,3). Anyhow, RV. 2,23,7 mentions the attempts of a malignant enemy and a wolf to hurt the *anāgas*- ones. In this passage divine intervention is called upon for averting the threat. RV. 4,54,3 is remarkable for an appeal to Savitar for ascertaining among gods and men, the innocence of those speaking<sup>10</sup> on account of their conviction that they have sinned unwittingly or from human weakness.

The much feared night, the "black horror" (*abhyam asitam*: RV. 4,51,9), is eagerly implored for protection against demons, robbers, wild animals etc.: i.e. night is asked not to do harm to men (AV. 19,47–50), and to commit them uninjured (*ariṣṭa*-) to dawn (19,47,2; cf. 48,1; 50,3); in 19,50,7, the last stanza of this series, the poet asks to be committed to dawn *anāgas*- "free from *āgas*": is this the *āgas* committed by evil intentions, *āgas* contracted unwittingly, evil coming from others, evil incurred by the contact with the nocturnal sphere and dangers, or all this evil indiscriminately? In this light should no doubt be viewed the prayer for freedom from *āgas*, addressed to the Sun and Dawn (*Sūrya* and *Uṣas*), added to a prayer for the favour of heaven and earth, in RV. 10,35,2. Compare also RV. 10,37,9 where the sun is asked to rise *anāgāstvena* "with freedom from *āgas*". RV. 1,123,3 Savitar is expected to announce a man's freedom from *āgas* to the sun (*Sūrya*). The sun –

<sup>9</sup> For *Nirṛti* now see also L. Renou, in the S. K. Chatterji Jubilee volume, *Indian Linguistics*, 16 (Madras, 1955), p. 11 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Keith's translation, TS. 4, 1, 11, 2 "instigate us to sinlessness" is hardly tenable.

who though distinguished from the group of Ādityas, is also called son of Aditi, – on his part is to pass this information on to Mitra, Varuṇa, or to those and Aryaman and Agni (7,60,1; 62,2). Mitra, Aditi and the Sun are expected to be able to announce a man's freedom from *āgas* to Varuṇa: RV. 10,12,8, no doubt to secure him against the god's chastisement.

RV. 6,50,2 a similar thought is expressed: the poet asks the Sun (Sūrya) – the all-seeing god (1,50,2) who beholds the good and bad deeds of all beings (1,50,7 etc.)<sup>11</sup> – to approach the gods, viz. the sons of Dakṣa, on the *anāgāstva*- of himself and his patrons, that is: on the assurance that they are pure and free. It seems however dubious whether this function is only due to Sūrya's 'omniscience'.<sup>12</sup> The light of the sun is the great dispeller of all darkness, evil and impurity. It drives away illness (RV. 10,37,4) and prolongs the days of life (8,48,7). RV. 1,104,6 Indra is addressed to give those praying their due share in the light of the sun, water and *anāgāstva*-. In an imprecation on an evil-doer, AthV. 13,3 an act of *āgas* consisting in doing harm to a brahman is stated to be an offence against the Sun, who is implored to make the offender quake, to destroy him and to perform what usually is Varuṇa's task, i.e. to fasten his fetters (st. 1). Incidentally other gods are also concerned in stating innocence: RV. 7,66,4 "when today Mitra, Aryaman, Savitar and Bhaga appoint (authorize) those that are *anāgas*-" – In RV. 3,54,19 the messenger of the gods (Agni) is entrusted with the announcement of "purity" and *sarvatāt*-.<sup>13</sup>

Freedom from *āgas* and servitude, or rather complaisance, to Varuṇa are complementary ideas in RV. 7,86,7, that is to say, if the words *aram dāso na mīlhuṣe karāṇi* "I will do what is adequate (suitable, apposite)<sup>14</sup> like a servant with regard to a liberal man" imply the idea of compliance (in the good sense of the term). For it is Varuṇa who delivers man from 'guilt' or *āgas*, like a girdle (RV. 2,28,5): the simile is the more intelligible as RV. 2,29,5 the consequences of evil are fetters: the fetters of the gods, which are often specially handled by Varuṇa. However, the punishment of the perpetrators of *āgas* apparently was also Indra's concern: 8,45,34. The above rôle played by Mitra, Varuṇa and Savitar explains their being called *āgomucaḥ* "saviours from the evil called *āgas*" (TS. 7,5,22,1; MS.

<sup>11</sup> A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 30 f.

<sup>12</sup> See Pettazzoni, *o.c.*, p. 8 f.; 121.

<sup>13</sup> This does not mean: "in vollem Masse".

<sup>14</sup> For *aram* and *alam* with *kr*- see "The meaning of the word *alamkāra*-" in the *New Indian Antiquary* (F. W. Thomas Comm. Vol.) (Bombay, 1939), p. 97 ff.



3,15,11; Kāth. 45,19), an epithet which however is in these scriptures also given to Vāyu and the Aśvins; in the same series of formulas Agni and Indra are called saviours from *aṃhas*, the Maruts and the Viśve Devāḥ saviours from *enas*.

Returning to the gods who could be offended by man's *āgas* producing conduct, attention may be directed towards the phrase RV. 10,36,12 *anāgā mitre varuṇe svastaye* "free from *āgas* with regard to Mitra and Varuṇa in order to well-being"; cf. also 7,87,7.

The state of being free from *āgas* gives man a claim to Aditi's love: RV. 7,60,1 where I would deviate from Geldner's interpretation:<sup>15</sup> "When today, O sun thou, rising, art to give notice with truth to Mitra and Varuṇa of those who are free from *āgas*, we eulogists might be dear to thee among the gods, O Aditi and Aryaman." Elsewhere it is Aditi herself who declares a man to be free from *āgas*: 4,39,3.<sup>16</sup> Here the question arises as to how far the term *aditi-* in this stanza refers to an independent 'deity' or 'power'. Sāyaṇa explaining it by *akhaṇḍanīyah* "not to be broken, indestructible" took it to be a qualification of the divine steed Dadhikrāvan: "who commemorates D. shall be declared to be free from *āgas* by Aditi". In that case the horse might be considered a manifestation of Aditi. RV. 1,94,15 Agni is doubtless identified with Aditi, or rather conceived as a representative of the idea conveyed by that name: "we might be among Those, to whom Thou, Aditi, grantest freedom from *āgas* together with a sound and safe condition. Thou, Agni, knowest what is happiness; prolong our lifetimes on earth! Mitra, Varuṇa, Aditi, Sindhu, Earth and Heavens should grant us that boon". But 1,162,22 Aditi seems to be an individual deity, although part of the commentaries identifies her with the steed to which the sūkta is devoted and which is mentioned in the last part of the verse: "Aditi must cause our deliverance from *āgas*" (*anāgāstvaṃ no aditiḥ kṛṇotu*). There can be, on the other hand, no doubt that RV. 8,101,15 Aditi is identified with the cow, the relative of the gods, "navel of immortality" or eternal source of life, which, moreover, is free from *āgas* (*anāgā*) herself. Both concepts, freedom from *āgas* and that expressed by Aditi, are co-ordinated in RV. 10,63,10 – a stanza recurring AV. 7,6,2; VS. 21,6; TS. 1,5,11,5, etc. – where, after an invocation of the well-protecting earth, the sky, and the well-sheltering, well-conducting Aditi, the wish is formulated to embark

<sup>15</sup> Geldner, *o.c.*, II, p. 235. The form *anāgā(h)* may be a nominative; see the present author's article "Defining the nominative", in *Lingua*, 4 (1956), esp. p. 292 ff.

<sup>16</sup> There is room for the observation that Pañc.Br. 1, 5, 19 Aditi is considered to possess "an endless sharpness of sight."

the well-oared, unleaking ship of the gods, in order to achieve well-being. In all texts, with the exception of the AV., this ship is qualified as *anāgas* : *pāparahitā* "free from evil" (Sāyaṇa), which may stand for: "where no *āgas*-infected persons are admitted" (Geldner). In the AV. the adjective is in the nominative, applying to the passengers. It is no doubt the condition of being free from *āgas* and the intention to adhere firmly to pure conduct which are meant by the expression *anu vratāny aditer ṛdhantaḥ* (RV. 7,87,7). The man who is pure with a view to Aditi (*anāgaso aditaye* RV. 5,82,6) hopes to receive everything dear or pleasant (*vāmāni*). The question arises what the syntactic group "with a view to A." means: "schuldlos vor Aditi" (Geldner), or "with a view to reach, to associate with, Aditi", or, what seems most likely, "with a view to be freed from fetters"?<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere a god is implored to free a man from *āgas* with regard to Aditi: 4,12,4 *kṛdhī ṣu asmāṃ aditer anāgān*. It may again be asked what is the exact significance of the phrase *aditer anāgān*. Geldner's translation: "so mach uns fein vor A. frei von Schuld" and Keith's<sup>18</sup> "blameless before Aditi" cannot be regarded as certain because of the utter rarity of the 'genitive instead of a dative' in the Veda;<sup>19</sup> *aditer* might be a pure genitive: "Aditi's pure ones", "*āgas*-less ones of freedom", i.e. "*āgas*-less and free".

Dwelling for a moment upon the above formula *anāgaso aditaye syāma* it is worth mentioning that it also occurs in combination with different lines. AV. 7,34,1 seems to be very instructive: "O Agni, drive away my rivals . . . , put underfoot those that want to fight me; free from 'pollution' may we belong to Aditi". If *anāgasas* can mean here "free from evil caused by inimical influences such as hatred, envy, incantation or 'sin' connected with these hostile sentiments", the thoughts expressed in this stanza are homogeneous.

An intimate connection between the state of being *anāgas*- and that of being identical or identified with Aditi is doubtless meant by the poet of RV. 7,51,1, who calls upon the Ādityas for protection asking them "to put this sacrifice in freedom from bonds and freedom from *āgas* (*anāgāstve aditīve*)." It might, to wind up with, be remembered that the attainment of the highest goal, freedom from birth and death, and positively, oneness with Īśvara is Śvet.Up. 1,11 referred to by the observation that "by

<sup>17</sup> In Sāyaṇa's opinion the words mean: "to the indestructible goddess Earth."

<sup>18</sup> A. B. Keith, *Veda of the Black Yajus School*, p. 390 (= TS. 4, 7, 15, 7).

<sup>19</sup> See J. S. Speyer, *Vedische und Sanskrit-syntax* (Strassburg, 1896), p. 20; B. Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, (Halle 1888), p. 162.



knowing God all fetters fall off" (*jñātvā devaṃ sarvapāśāpahāniḥ*).

Turning our attention finally to Śat.Br. 5,5,2,10 where the statement is made that the Ādityas, i.e. the sons of Aditi, are the All, i.e. the Complete (that of which no part or element is lacking) – *sarvaṃ vā ādityāḥ* – we may observe that the existence of relations between Freedom, which obviously was conceived as absolute, and Completeness cannot be denied: lack of freedom meant lack of that which was called *sarvatāti*-. In the difficult passage RV. 10,100,1-11 *ā sarvatātīm aditīṃ vṛṇīmahe* the idea of *sarvatāti*-. is indeed associated with Aditi. The interpretation of this verse is uncertain: Geldner's<sup>20</sup> "Wir erbitten Vollkommenheit von der Aditi", "we desire a safe and sound condition, i.e. salvation, (and) 'guiltlessness'" and "we desire completeness, i.e. a safe and sound condition, salvation, that is to say: Aditi" being the three translations possible. As already indicated elsewhere<sup>21</sup> the third interpretation might be defended on the strength of the consideration that the 'goddess' who represents, inter alia, the place of universal creation which must continually be protected from narrowness and obstruction,<sup>22</sup> must have been concerned also with width, broadness and extension, conceptions essential in the idea conveyed by the term *sarvatāti*-. which also covered the ideas of "unimpaired strength, faculties and unimpeded movement".

## XII

Although there can be no point in examining the semantic implications of all the terms relating to birth, relationship, etc., some reflections may follow here on the important word *garbha*-. Meaning, inter alia, "foetus, embryo, child", it is often used in connection with divine powers, natural phenomena and other entities to which biological terminology has strictly speaking no application. In order to illustrate the Vedic usage of *garbha*- attention may be drawn to RV. 10,82,2,5 f. where it refers to the first or primeval principle of creation, the single germ in which "in the beginning" all divine powers (*devāḥ*) united and on which all creatures "are founded". In the beginning, RV. 10,121,1 says, the nameless god became this original golden 'germ', which, according to stanza 7, was the

<sup>20</sup> Geldner, *Der Rig-veda übersetzt*, III, p. 313.

<sup>21</sup> See *Reflections on sarva*-. . . , p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> See *Aspects of early Vignulism*, p. 72; cf. p. 115 ff.

All.<sup>1</sup> After having fecundated the primeval waters a specific divinity, such as Agni, came into existence (ibid. 7). RV. 1,164,33 man is pictured as having an embryo relation with the cosmos; 1,185,2 this conception seems to have been extended to all living beings. Another interesting text is Ait.Up. 2,1, stating that the embryo in a human being is not identical with the semen which is the *tejas* "vigour, energy" – an identification often found in a variety of texts – which has come together from all the limbs. It may in this connection be remembered that a son is, according to the KausBrUp. 2,11, said to have been born from every limb of the father, being his self (*ātman-*) and being *tejas*.

It is in harmony with this conception that individual divinities are described as *garbhas* of the cosmic order or 'law' prevailing in nature, the 'order' or "eternal course of things" (*ṛta-*). Viṣṇu, whose central function was to represent the eternal phenomenon of the pervading and omnipresent, mighty and blessing stream of celestial light and energy to the terrestrial regions,<sup>2</sup> is considered the first *garbha-* of *ṛta-* (1,156,3). Or a godhead is a "*garbha-* or child of the world": thus Vāta "the wind": 10,168,4, who is in the world like an embryo in its mother; cf. also 3,46,5 heaven (sky) and earth bear the soma like a mother her unborn child. The phrase is applied to Agni 10,45,6 "Kind der Welt" (Geldner): as such he filled, as soon as he was born, heaven and earth. Cf. also 10,1,2 Agni as child of heaven and earth, distributed in the plants. Passages in which a *garbha-* relation in cosmos or nature and the biological embryo relation are paralleled are not wanting: 10,183,3; 3,46,5.

The germ is, on the other hand, compared to one of the power-substances which are discussed in the foregoing pages: 5,58,7 the Maruts, during the course of whose flight the earth extended,<sup>3</sup> placed their *śavas* "heroism" in her like a husband the germ (in his wife). Here the earth is obviously conceived as becoming pregnant and, hence, extending by the 'heroic power' of the Maruts which assumes a substantial appearance as the fructifying rain. Among the other places worth mentioning is RV. 6,48,5 where Agni as the *garbha-* of the *ṛta-* "order, truth" is stated to be filled or fed by the waters, the rocks (stones), the trees. But the same god is also described as bearing the *garbha-* of his father and procreator:

<sup>1</sup> For the 'golden germ' see F. D. K. Bosch, *De gouden kiem* (Amsterdam, 1948), p. 47 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 172 ff.

<sup>3</sup> For the importance of 'broadness' and 'extension' see *Aspects*, p. 61 ff.; 68 ff. etc., and a paper on the Ancient Indian concept of *amhas* in the *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. I (The Hague, 1957), pp. 33–60.



3,1,10; this must mean that he keeps a pre-existent principle; cf. also 3,27,9.<sup>4</sup> Agni is the *garbha*- of the wood (10,46,5; cf. 1,70,3; of the plants 2,1,14), i.e. the child of wood, but also *garbha*- in the wood (2,10,3): he is contained in the kindling-sticks like an embryo: 3,29,2. Cf. also 3,31,3; 10,8,2. In a similar way Agni is contained in the waters; he is their *garbha*:- 3,1,12; 5,3 etc. Cf. also 1,95,4.<sup>5</sup> Curiously enough, Agni who is a *garbha*- himself is, e.g. AV. 5,25,7 (a collection of stanzas used in a rite for successful conception) implored to make a woman conceive.

Very instructive are also the two 'hymns' devoted, in the RV. (10,84 f.) and, with a few variants, in the AV. (4,31 f.), to Manyu "Fury, Wrath" or "Kampfzorn" (Geldner). Manyu is on the one hand a divinity in its own right, a companion of the Maruts, who joins those who go to war; he is implored to gain the victory, being brilliant like fire, and to be the commander-in-chief, to destroy the enemies, to measure out *ojas* and to protect those praying. It is, on the other hand, expressly stated that Manyu was Indra, Varuṇa and Jātavedas; that is to say that Manyu has taken possession of these gods, that they embody him. He is also addressed as Indra's *vajra*- or thunderbolt, being a missile (*sāyaka*-), born together with *ābhūti*-, a 'concept' which, though difficult of interpretation, may have been something like "success". United with *tapas* "Ardour", he slays the enemies of his adorers. Those who have worshipped him, the missile thunderbolt, gain overwhelming force and creative power (*saha ojaḥ puṣyati*), "may we, with thee as ally, who art made of power (*sahas*) overpower (*sah-*) with powerful power (*sahasā sahasvatā*)". Being himself of overwhelming *ojas*, self-existent and to a considerable degree possessed of *sahas* Manyu is invoked to put, in combats, *ojas* in his worshippers.

There does not seem much use in prolonging this list of power-substances which were also conceived as divine persons. One of the most important among them, "prosperity", *Śrī*- or *śrī*-, having been discussed at some length in another publication,<sup>6</sup> a few general remarks will suffice here.

Some of these godheads are real 'Sondergötter' representing a limited sphere of action, a special process or phenomenon, who also when they are addressed as persons retain their special function. Others extend their sphere of interest: *Anumati*, "(Divine) Favour or Grace", for instance is in the Atharva- and Yajurvedas a goddess of love, presiding

<sup>4</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 360 f.

<sup>5</sup> See Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, ch. II.

over propagation.<sup>7</sup> Others are more or less incidentally put on a par with, or received among, divine powers of greater notability. *Kāla*-(Time) for instance is AV. 13,2,39 brought into connection with Prajāpati because both of them are representatives of "the ruddy one", i.e. the sun, and in 19,53 f. of the same corpus he is a god who drives, sets in motion and generates. The word *sūnṛta*- which may have denoted some idea in the sphere of youthful vitality,<sup>8</sup> whilst occurring as an impersonal concept in RV. 1,8,8 "his (Indra's) *s.* is great, abounding in cows..." (similarly 1,30,5; 6,65,12), appears as a goddess in her own right in 1,134,1 (accompanying Vāyu, "Wind"); 10,141,2 she is even called a *devī* "goddess".

Root nouns may be used either as action or agent words and it is not always easy to see whether a process or phenomenon or an individual being was meant – if it is even correct to make this distinction as often as a modern mind would resort to it. The remarkable use of the word *dviṣ-* gives occasion to the following observation. RV. 1,39,10 "hatred" or "hostility" is an entity like an arrow which may be shot by godlike beings: "Hurl Thy hostility at the . . . hater of the ṛṣis, O Maruts, like an arrow!" Elsewhere it is an evil potency against which the help and protection of various gods is implored (2,7,2; 5,25,1 etc.). Grassmann<sup>9</sup> was inclined to regard cases such as 1,41,3 as referring to a personal power *dviṣ-* "hater": *vi durgā vi dviṣaḥ puro ghnanti rājāna eṣām* "the kings (i.e. the Ādityas) destroy before<sup>10</sup> them (i.e. their worshippers) the difficulties,<sup>11</sup> the hostilities". How difficult it often is to decide between a personal or impersonal interpretation may for instance appear from 6,60,6 *hato vṛtrāṇy āryā hato dāsāni satpatī | hato viśvā apa dviṣaḥ*: here Geldner translates the neuter *vṛtrāṇi* by "Feinde" and the feminine *dviṣaḥ* by "Anfeindungen", but there is no good reason why these translations could not be given in the reverse order. RV. 8,43,26 *dviṣas* ("Anfeindungen" Geldner, but "haters" would also be possible) is in a similar way associated with the neuter *rakṣāṃsī* ("Unholde" Geldner). Three root words combine in 8,45,40 *bhindhī viśvā apa dviṣaḥ parī bādho jahī mṛdhaḥ | vasu spārhaṃ tad ā bhara* "Schlage alle Feinde ab, (halte) die Bedränger fern, erschlag die Verächter! Das begehrenswerte Gut, das bring mit!"

<sup>7</sup> See also *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 226.

<sup>8</sup> See *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 653.

<sup>10</sup> For the sense of "before" see the author's article "Purohita" in *Studia Indologica* (Festschrift-W. Kirfel, Bonn, 1955), p. 107 ff.

<sup>11</sup> See also the author's article on *amhas*.



Cf. also 8,61,13; AV. 19,15,1. Here also, impersonal terms might be used in translating. RV. 9,8,7 where *dviṣaḥ* occurs in opposition to *maghonaḥ* “the munificent (institutors of sacrifices)”, it may preferably be rendered by “haters”.

How easily these poets pass from a personal to an impersonal view of divine power (or vice versa) may also appear from AV. 2,6,5 *ati niho ati sridho 'ty acittīr ati dviṣaḥ | viśvā hy agne duritā tara tvam* “over enviers, over delinquents, over the thoughtless, over haters, – verily all difficulties, O Agni, do thou cross”. A *brahmadviṣ-* is, on the other hand, always a personal concept: “hater of the manifestations of brahman”, cf. e.g. RV. 3,30,17; 6,52,2; 7,104,2. Similar remarks could be made in connection with *dveṣas*.

In discussing the existence of a considerable number of “masculine formations which cannot be classed as agent nouns, and which from the point of view of their meanings go rather with the neuter action nouns” Burrow<sup>12</sup> rightly observes that in a few cases we might be dealing with disguised agent nouns: *reṣmān-* “whirlwind”, which is accented as an agent noun, may be interpreted as an original “who damages or destroys”, the verb *riṣ-* meaning “to damage or injure”.

Sometimes a ‘power-concept’ has given rise to an abundance of expressions for the different aspects under which the power might be seen and for the various relations into which it might enter with other powers. *Ūrj-* “strengthening, vigour” and especially “strengthening food, refreshment” was not rarely used in such a way that it may have been regarded as a person: RV. 1,92,17 “O Aśvins, bring us *ūrj-* (or: *Ūrj-*?)”.<sup>13</sup> Similarly 1,157,4. If so, the conclusion must be that 6,62,4 beauty, satiation, and refreshment, which being associated with *ūrj-* likewise follow in the Aśvins’ train (*śubham prkṣam iṣam ūrjaṃ vahantā*) are also persons. RV. 1,119,2 however the goddess Urjanī makes her appearance, mounting the vehicle of the Aśvins. She is accompanied by the *ūtayas*, a term translated by “Schutzgeister” (Geldner): *prati yanty ūtayaḥ* may indeed be taken to refer to a movement made by autonomous beings, and RV. 1,52,4 the same plural form occurs in a line describing how Indra’s aids, his fresh energies, assisted him in the Vṛta combat or according to Thieme:<sup>14</sup> “Diesem Indra folgten als Hilfen beim Vṛta-Kampf (oder: bei der Zerschlagung der Widerstände) seine Schnaubkräfte, die keines

<sup>12</sup> T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit language* (London, 1955), p. 132 f.

<sup>13</sup> See also Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 161.

<sup>14</sup> P. Thieme, “*psu*” in *Festschrift-W. Schubring* (Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde) (Hamburg, 1951), p. 3.

Windes bedürfen, deren Atemhauch nicht stockt": *taṃ vṛtrahatye anu tashthur ūtayah śusmā indram avātā ahrutapsavaḥ*. Besides, Agni is called *ūrjo napāt*, *ūrjah putra-* and *ūrjām pati-*, expressions which have already been dealt with in a preceding section of this publication.

It may be worth while to enumerate some other passages mentioning the form or manifestation of a power-substance or powerful being or 'concept'. That an entity which is a *rūpa-* of an 'idea' or power is that power is clearly stated in Pañc.Br. 8,9,10 "The syllable *ā* (at the end of a sequence of words: *gāyanti tvā gāyatriṇa ā* "the singers celebrate thee") is the *rūpa-* of the rathantara; for *ā* is the rathantara.<sup>15</sup> Śat.Br. 7,2,4,30 Prajāpati is described as both the defined and the undefined; the author however adds some remarks on "that form of his which is defined" (*niruktaṃ rūpaṃ*); obviously the defined is a form of him who is both the defined and the undefined. In a similar way the flowing of the waters is declared to be a manifestation of eternal truth, for waters are the truth: Śat.Br. 7,4,1,6. In the brāhmaṇas such statements as the following are not rare: Ait.Br. 8,7,10 the brahman supremacy and lordly power, the essence of nutritious food, of water and useful plants, any refreshing draught, a well-nourished condition, generative power are expressly enumerated among the manifestations of royal power: *kṣatrarūpaṃ tat*. We can form an idea of the character of this relation by comparing ibid. 2,1,6 where the *bilva* – the wood-apple tree which is sacred to *śrī-* or "Prosperity" – is considered a *rūpa-* of food.

Pañc.Br. 4,2,16 a particular verse is called the *rūpa* of the year; ibid. 19 twenty-four syllables are a *rūpa-* of a twenty-four versed (chant); 4,6,6 the tristich SV. 2,978-980 = RV. 4,47,1-3 containing the word *śukra-* "bright" (sc. Soma) is considered a *rūpa-* of the sun; 4,9,3 the cow is called a *rūpa-* of *virāj-*,<sup>16</sup> probably because *virāj-* is food, cf. e.g. Śat.Br. 8,3,2,13 and the cow yields milk, i.e. food. Pañc.Br. 8,6,14 *akṣara-* "syllable", but also "imperishable" is, on account of the latter meaning, likewise called a *rūpa-* of *virāj-*. A curious instance is, in the same brāhmaṇa 5,5,9: during the ceremonies of the mahāvratā the hotar (one of the priests) recites after having mounted a swing; thereby a *rūpa-* of merriment is brought about (*mahasa eva tad rūpaṃ kriyate*).<sup>17</sup> Joy and

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Jaim. Br. 1, 258 (Caland's *Auswahl*, no. 92).

<sup>16</sup> For *virāj-* which is often identified with food and prosperity see *Aspects of early Vīṣṇuism*, p. 67 f.; 77; 187; 199.

<sup>17</sup> W. Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-brāhmaṇa* (Calcutta, 1931), p. 81, seems right in translating *mahāsa* by "merriment"; by itself the word can also mean "greatness, might, splendour, glory".



festivities are widely believed to be means of creating prosperity and happiness;<sup>18</sup> swinging, which is, *inter alia*, also one of the joyful solemnities of the Indian holy festival,<sup>19</sup> is also in other parts of the world a ritual act observed in order to conduct the blessings of heaven to the earth and the human community.<sup>20</sup> This belief is also expressed by the author of the Taitt.Br. 1,2,6,6 "the swing is *mahas*; (swinging is done) in order to obtain *mahas*, i.e. food" (*mahasa evānnādyasyāvaruddhyai*). The round hide used in another ceremony of the mahāvratā is, *ibid.* 5,5,17, stated to be a *rūpa-* of the sun, an opinion corroborated by the Kāṭh. 39,3 "the round white hide: a *rūpa-* of the sun".<sup>21</sup> The companions of the ruler, who are, for ceremonious reasons, clad in armour are, *ibid.* 21 called a *rūpa-*<sup>22</sup> of *indriya-* (i.e. *bala-* "strength" comm.) "Indra's power, courage". The words "by fiercely brilliant lustre" are according to Pañc.Br. 6,9,25 a manifestation or representation of the gāyatrī (*dauidyūtatyā rucetī vai gāyatrī rūpam*), this metre being identified with splendour and spiritual lustre (Ait.Br. 1,5,2 *tejo vai brahmavarcaṣaṁ gāyatrī*). "By using a verse containing these words one makes them (i.e. the institutors of the sacrifice, comm.) (by means of the gāyatrī, comm.) prosper by its own *rūpa-* (being a manifestation<sup>23</sup> of lustre or splendour)". Here again an entity, believed to be a manifestation of a power, may be stimulated to generate or diffuse that power. The word *abhi* ("unto") is a *rūpa-* of the rathantara, this sāman being the first laud on a certain first day; for the idea of "(going) unto" harmonizes with a first day: 11,4,1.<sup>24</sup> The word *agriya-* "the first" is a *rūpa-* of the bṛhat, because that sāman existed before the rathantara: cf. *ibid.* 11,6,2. Of course verses containing the word *bṛhat-* "firm, solid" are also considered a manifestation of the same sāman: 11,7,3. The word *huve* "I call" is on the other hand a manifestation of the rathantara because it forms part of the verse on

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. A. Piganiol, *Recherches sur les jeux romains* (Strasbourg, 1923), p. 137 ff.; W. B. Kristensen, *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 44 (1910), p. 1 ff.; Van der Leeuw, *Religion*, p. 56 ff. Piganiol, p. 146, n. 5, quotes Rhys, *Celtic heathendom*: "Among the blessings promised to the men of Leinster from . . . duly celebrating the established games, were plenty of corn, fruit, milk, . . . domestic prosperity . . .".

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. B. A. Gupte, *Hindu holidays and ceremonials* (Calcutta, 1919), p. 88 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, VII, p. 107; A. C. Kruyt, "Het schommelen in de Indische archipel", *Bijdragen Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 97, p. 363 ff., and the author's "Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas", *Acta Or.*, 19, p. 348 f.; 388 ff.

<sup>21</sup> See *Ursprung und Wesen des indischen Dramas*, p. 350.

<sup>22</sup> Here and elsewhere Caland, *o.c.*, translates *rūpa-* by "characteristic mark", which seems less satisfactory than "manifestation" or "representation".

<sup>23</sup> "Feature" or "nature" Caland, *o.c.*, p. 127.

<sup>24</sup> For particulars see Caland, *o.c.*, p. 253.

which the rathantara is chanted: 12,2,4. A *rūpa-* of hospitality is brought about by presenting verses beginning: "the guest most beloved to you" (SV. 1,5 = RV. 8,84,1-3): 14,2,1. The seasons are a *rūpa-* of arising (13,2,8) because, as the commentary explains, in them the herbs and trees arise. A golden ornament for the neck or breast is in an intelligible way a *rūpa-* of "glitter" or "brilliance" (*tvīṣi*): Jaim.Br. 2,103.<sup>25</sup> The horse is a manifestation of Prajāpati (ibid. 2,129); this "lord of creatures" who is identified with productiveness (Śat.Br. 5,1,3,9), the worlds (ibid. 6,3,1,11), immortality (ibid. 6,3,1,17), the source of creation (7,1,2,1) and other such all-embracing 'concepts' is the thirty-fourth god (Śat.Br. 5,1,2,13) – the additional one in whom the group attains its perfection and who 'symbolizes' their totality –, a horse is in performing a certain sacrifice, added to thirty-three cows. What is white is a *rūpa-* of speech, of the *ṛcas*, of Agni, of death; what is black, a *rūpa-* of water, food, mind, and of the *yajus*: JUpBr. 1,25,7 ff. Beating and scolding are a manifestation of physical strength (*bala-*): Jaim.Br. 2,298.

An interesting custom is described in the Jaim.Br. 3,115: they chant a hymn of praise with the *mahānāmni* stanzas, after having placed water close by; this is done in order to make the *sāman-* (sacred text to be chanted) complete, for water is the complete manifestation (*sarvaṃ rūpaṃ*)<sup>26</sup> of the *mahānāmni* stanzas. Another chapter worth mentioning is Jaim.Br. 3,152: Varuṇa, aspiring to the supremacy over the other gods obtained from Prajāpati the *Varuṇasāman-*, P.'s "royal manifestation" (*rājyaṃ*);<sup>27</sup> the gods seeing in him Prajāpati's *rūpa-* accordingly acknowledged his supreme position. Śat.Br. 7,3,2,16 a white horse is declared to be a *rūpa-*<sup>28</sup> of the sun. The fire is the immortal element of the sacrifice, because it is a *rūpa-* of the sun (Śat.Br. 10,2,6,17); in man breath is the immortal element, because breath is a *rūpa-* of fire (ibid. 18). A chip of gold put in the offering-ladle is a *rūpa-* of fire, <sup>29</sup> etc. (ibid. 11,7,4,4).

Though far from surprising by themselves the instances of psychical processes attributed to entities which in the eyes of modern man are

<sup>25</sup> Thus the edition by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra (Nagpur, 1954); *diviyo* (Caland's *Auswahl*, p. 156) is obviously to be rejected.

<sup>26</sup> For *sarva-* see Chatterji Jubilee Volume, *Indian Linguistics*, 16 (Madras, 1955), p. 53 ff.

<sup>27</sup> I take these words to mean: "manifestation as a king"; Caland translated "Meine Herrschaft, meine Gestalt" (*Auswahl*, p. 259 f.).

<sup>28</sup> Eggeling's (*Sacred Books of the East*, 41, p. 360) translation is: "form".

<sup>29</sup> "Representative" rather than "type" (Eggeling, *o.c.*, 44, p. 125).



lifeless deserve passing mention.<sup>30</sup> RV. 1,52,10 "even the strong sky receded for fear" needs no more comment than 1,54,1 where the rivers cry and 1,61,14 where the mountains like heaven and earth are said to be frightened.<sup>31</sup> RV. 1,121,11 Heaven and Earth rejoice over Indra's deeds applauding him, although in the same verse they are described as two wheelless entities (chariots, accompanying Indra when he goes to the wars). That the river Sindhu, which of course is also a goddess, is asked to answer prayers is intelligible (see 1,122,6). The smile of lightning (1,168,8), which impresses us as a metaphor, may belong also under this heading: cf. 1,38,8 where lightning, shedding rain, lows like a cow, as a mother following her calf.<sup>32</sup>

In perusing the Veda a variety of figurative phrases may be found the use of which cannot be disconnected from the semi-personal character attributed to what in our eyes are immaterial entities, processes or phenomena. Thus Indra is RV. 1,57,4 implored to accept the speaker's word as his train. Ibidem 1,52,4 Indra's aids (*ūtayas*) assisted him in the Vṛtra combat, in st. 5 they even came to the help of his *svavṛṣṭi*, a term of dubious significance, which either refers to Indra's greatness<sup>33</sup> or to his power of raining. Ibidem 1,160,1 Sky and Earth are stated to bear the seer of space (*rajaso dhārayatkavī*): to all probability this phrase refers to the sun.<sup>34</sup> Such terms as womb and navel are repeatedly used with reference to cosmic phenomena and processes: cf. e.g. 1,164,33 ff.<sup>35</sup> RV. 1,164,36 speaks of the seed (*retas*) of the world which is distributed by the seven creative beings under Viṣṇu's direction. RV. 1,122,12 splendour (*dyumna-*) and liberality (*vasutāti-*) are stated to be at ease in a definite person ("bei denen Glanz und Freigebigkeit gern weilen möge" Geldner).

In illustration of the opinion fostered by the Indians with regard to the relations of divine beings and powers mention may be made of some passages in later texts. In Kālikā-purāṇa 31,40 f. the body of Viṣṇu-the boar is said to lose its strength when the *tejas* is withdrawn from it.

<sup>30</sup> For non-difference between living and lifeless nature experienced by mystics see e.g. G. Huber, *Ākāṣa, der mystische Raum* (Zürich, 1955), p. 85.

<sup>31</sup> For the sense of *tuj-* see *Remark on the Sanskrit passive*, p. 89, n. 174.

<sup>32</sup> See also Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*<sup>3</sup>, I, p. 137: "Die unstäte Natur des Blitzes war seiner Entwicklung zu einer Gottheit nicht günstig"; E. Hardy, *Die vedisch-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens* (Münster, 1893), p. 64.

<sup>33</sup> Thus Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 67 f.

<sup>34</sup> Thus Geldner, *o.c.*, I, p. 218. See also Sāyaṇa: *dhārayatkavir manīṣi ādityo yayos te tādṛīyau, vṛṣṭyudakadhārayatsūryopete ity arthaḥ*.

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 84 ff.

The ancient Indian king who was considered a *deva*- ("god") was a bearer of a principle of supranormal might and dignity. The possession of *tejas* "fiery energy" entitled him to respect.<sup>36</sup> "The protector of creatures (i.e. the king), even if he is sinful, may not be disregarded by his subjects, because he, by his own *tejas*, bears (literally: *bibharti*) the *ojas* of the guardians of the universe (the *lokapālāḥ* or great gods)" (BhāgPur. 4,13,23). This same principle enables him to perform great exploits: "with his excellent weapons the brilliantly-powerful (*pratāpavān*) son of Subhadrā, endued with *tejas*, slew his enemies on every side" (Mbh. 7,39,7).

Another term which being related to kingship deserves passing notice is *pratāpa*- or "majesty". Kullūka, in explaining Manu 7,7, observes that the sovereign is called *pratāpa*- "majesty" – the word implying also such ideas as "heat, splendour, brilliancy, glory, strength" – "because he consists of the constituent particles (*aṁśa*-) of Agni and the other gods and because he does what is their task". It may be remembered that this is one of the qualifications which the earthly ruler has in common with the sun.

It must however be emphasized that this lack of a clear and definitive distinction made between power of an impersonal character and personal beings endowed with power, or able to display a powerful activity is by no means an exclusive characteristic of the Indian culture. Strange as it might appear to a modern scientific mind, this distinction remains vague and fluid for 'primitive' thought, – the term 'primitive' to be taken in the very large sense of non-modern, pre-scientific, not preponderantly rationalistic. It is important to realize that this division of the world into animate and inanimate, with accompanying appropriate behaviours for each, is a sophisticated one that is alien to folk custom even among ourselves and has to be learned by each generation of our children.<sup>37</sup> This mode of viewing the phenomena of this world and man's attitude with regard to them passes without difficulty from the personal formulation of power to the impersonal. With reference to the Californian Indians it has been observed that a man who has learned the significance of our terms *power*, *essence*, *pervading quality*, etc., will of his own accord use them in connection with his own concepts, but at other times he will render these by 'spirit' in the sense of something personal, limited and

<sup>36</sup> See the relative remarks in *Numen*, *Int. Review for the history of Religions*, 3 (1956), p. 70 f.

<sup>37</sup> R. Benedict, *Religion*, in F. Boas, *General Anthropology* (Boston, 1938), p. 636.



spatial.<sup>38</sup> According to Karsten<sup>39</sup> the Indians of South America conceive, at one moment, the supernatural as a more or less personal spirit or demon; the next moment, again, as an impersonal 'mana'. "Soul, spirit, energy, and power are generally convertible terms in the primitive vocabulary."<sup>40</sup> In other *milieus* 'personification' seems to be closely associated with the tendency to assume the existence of 'lords' possessing or controlling a power; for instance, the *sila* of the Eskimos which means "universe, weather, intelligence" and Silap-Inua "Lord of the Universe or of Power".<sup>41</sup> This vagueness with regard to the definition of the unseen is by no means foreign to other civilized peoples of antiquity. Ancient Persian parallels for instance were at the time discussed by Lommel.<sup>42</sup>

It cannot be our concern to collect here a large number of parallels from other countries, but some salient points deserve passing mention.<sup>43</sup> In some languages, e.g. Chinook, a great many ideas expressed in other idioms by adjectives, are conceived as substantives. The Chinook will say "the man's badness killed the child's poverty" meaning that the bad man killed the poor child.<sup>44</sup> Thus a poor man is conceived rather as a person who has poverty, and it is not necessary that this quality should be regarded as a concrete object. Thus the Eskimos speak of smallness or largeness of an object, the Dakota Indians of strength and goodness where we would prefer adjectives.<sup>45</sup> According to the Toba-Batak (Sumatra)<sup>46</sup> *sahala* – the specific quality or natural disposition as well as the destiny of man, an aspect of his essence or *tondi* –, originating from the High God, is allotted already in the womb to those persons who are able to receive it. That is to say: a "richness *sahala*" is given to him who will be rich in life, a "happiness *sahala*" to

<sup>38</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington D.C., 1925), p. 513.

<sup>39</sup> R. Karsten, *The civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926), p. 505.

<sup>40</sup> S. C. Roy, "Magic and witchcraft on the Chota-Nagpur Plateau," *Journal R. Anthropol. Inst.*, 44 (1914), p. 324, cited by H. Webster, *Magic* (Stanford, Cal., 1948), p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> K. Birket-Smith, *Geschichte der Kultur* (Zürich, 1946), p. 388.

<sup>42</sup> H. Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras* (Tübingen, 1930), p. 82 f.

<sup>43</sup> For a definition or description of 'power' see also M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (München, 1941), p. 37 f.; 41 f.; 60 ff.; R. H. Lowie, *The history of ethnological theory* (New York, 1937), p. 251 ff. We do not mention here the widespread belief that persons who have undergone some unusual experience, or are distinguished by certain physical peculiarities are endowed with exceptional power.

<sup>44</sup> F. Boas, *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, I (Washington, 1911), p. 657.

<sup>45</sup> Boas, *General anthropology* (Boston, 1938), p. 142.

<sup>46</sup> See Ph. L. Tobing, *The structure of the Toba-Batak belief in the High God* (thesis Utrecht, 1956), p. 89.

him who will be happy, a "thief *sahala*" given in the same way will make a man a thief who will never be caught. The *tondi* is in a way likewise born together with the human being: before the *tondi* who is with the High God, enters the womb, the High God after having asked him what fate he desires, gives him what he wishes. Thus the High God, through the *tondi*, is in all living beings. Illness, misfortune etc. are imputed to the *tondi* leaving the body. The *tondi* is man himself, he is the bearer of a person's life, his character and vitality. "Consequently the *tondi*, although inseparable from the body is a mobile power in the body."<sup>47</sup>

A remarkable parallel to Indian examples of 'powers' conceived as attributes of a deity, but also apt to assume a personal form and to appear as his female partner is found in the religion of the ancient Romans. In ancient formulas handed down by Aulus Gellius 13,23 some names of ritual partners of male gods are enumerated, *inter alia*, *Salacia Neptuni* and *Nerio Martis*.<sup>48</sup> The former name was convincingly explained<sup>49</sup> as the "spouting power of sources", the latter is doubtless cognate with *Nero*, Gr. *ἀνήρ*, Skt. *nar-* and other words for "man"; though conceived as a war-goddess,<sup>50</sup> it may be considered to have originally expressed a 'quality' of the god (cf. the term *virtus: vir*). These words denoted aspects or special activities of more comprehensive divine functions.

The remainders and reminiscences of the view of life under discussion occurring in the literature of ancient Greece are too well known to deserve special comment. Homer P 210 ff. Ares is said to have entered into Hector's body, "and his limbs were filled within with valour and might" (*ἀλκῆς καὶ σθένος*). Strength, might, courage and similar qualities may be put in a man's heart: α 89 μένος ἐν φρεσὶ θέλω ; α 321 spirit and courage (μέμος καὶ θάρσος) are put (τίθημι, cf. *dadhāti* in Sanskrit, e.g. RV. 2,4,9; 9,8,8) into a man's θυμός. Zeus puts μέμος "spirit" into the knees and into the θυμός of horses: P 451 ff. When a hero is killed the poet says that τοῦ δ' αὖθις λύθη ψυχὴ τε μέμος τε (E 296), cf. e.g. RV. 1,32,9; 1,80,10. Further evidence in this direction are such phrases as N 248 σθένος Ἰδομενεὺς translatable in a modern language by "the mighty Idomeneus"; η 167 ἑρὸν μέμος Ἀλκινόου "the spirit of Alcinoos filled with supranormal

<sup>47</sup> Tobing, *o.c.*, p. 94.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (München, 1912), p. 22; A. Grenier, *Les religions étrusque et romaine* (Paris, 1948), p. 126 f.

<sup>49</sup> By H. Osthoff in A. von Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur römischen Religion*, p. 107.

<sup>50</sup> See also Wissowa, *o.c.*, p. 148.



power", i.e. in Murray's translation; "the strong and mighty A." (cf. e.g. RV. 1,54,3). As is well known Homer speaks occasionally also of parts of the body as if they were independent beings. Thus the γαστήρ is (e.g. ζ 133) said to command a living being to go in search of food.

If the above interpretation of the expressions of the type *sūnuḥ sahasaḥ* is not completely unfounded they can easily be paralleled by a number of well-known Semitic phrases. Accompanied by a genitive of a word denoting a quality the word "son" can, in Hebrew and Arabic, signify a person characterized by that quality. Thus, in Numeri 17,10 a "son of recalcitrance" is a recalcitrant man; Prov. 31,5 a "son of misery" is a miserable man; 1 Sam. 20,31 a "son of death" is "a man fallen to death, destined to die", "a dead man", and so on. Elsewhere these phrases serve to indicate the category to which one belongs: "the foreigners" are e.g. Ps. 18,45 called "sons of a foreign country". In Arabic, an *ibnu 's-sabīl* ("son of the way") is a "traveller", an *ibnu 'l-gharaṣ* ("son of selfishness") a "selfish person", an *ibnu 'l-ghaib* ("son of the invisible") "a nobody, a God knows who, an upstart".

We need not dwell here on other, but related, uses of the words for "son" in Semitic languages. In ancient Babylon and Assyria "child, son" (Ass. *māru*) could not only refer to the inhabitants of a locality but also to those filling a post or invested with an office – e.g. *mār ikkāri* "peasant";<sup>51</sup> *mār išpari* "weaver" –, and similar expressions are found in the Old Testament: "the sons of Sion" are the inhabitants of that town. The members of a community, those belonging to the same family or nationality are likewise the "sons" of that community: the children of Israel are the Israelites: (cf. the Greek υἱες Ἀχαιῶν "the Achaeans" in Homer; Hdt. 1,27 οἱ Λυδῶν παῖδες for the Lydians themselves). A man born in a definite town can be called her son.<sup>52</sup> That pupils of a teacher or prophet are addressed as his "sons" is a phenomenon of wide distribution also in other languages: cf., in Greek, Plato Rep. 407 ε οἱ (Ἀσκληπιοῦ) παῖδες "the physicians". A common Semitic idiom meaning "human being" in general (e.g. Num. 23,19) is "son of man".<sup>53</sup> Israel was considered to be the son of God; hence the name "children or sons of God" for the Israelites, especially for their king. Mention may also be made of the "men ('sons') of Belial", i.e. the wicked or worthless, mentioned in the

<sup>51</sup> See e.g. C. Bezold, *Babylon-Assyr. Glossar* (1926), s.v. *māru*.

<sup>52</sup> Thus we find in Malay *anak Melayu* "Malay"; *anak negeri* "native of a place" (*anak* "child", *negeri* "settlement, town").

<sup>53</sup> See R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London, 1953), p. 776.

Old Testament, who were representatives of a power of wickedness; sometimes (e.g. 2 Sam. 23,6) the word "men" is omitted, a Belial being "a wicked person". What these phrases have in common is this: an individual representing an 'idea' – whether it be the idea of a nationality, a family, a trade, technical skill, or religious conviction – can be indicated as its manifestation in flesh and blood, and conceived as having sprung from it.



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